Hafa Adai!

PSS: Central govt still owes $4.7M. PAGE 3

Dry weather already impacting CUC's water supply. PAGE 5

75¢

Saipan Tribune

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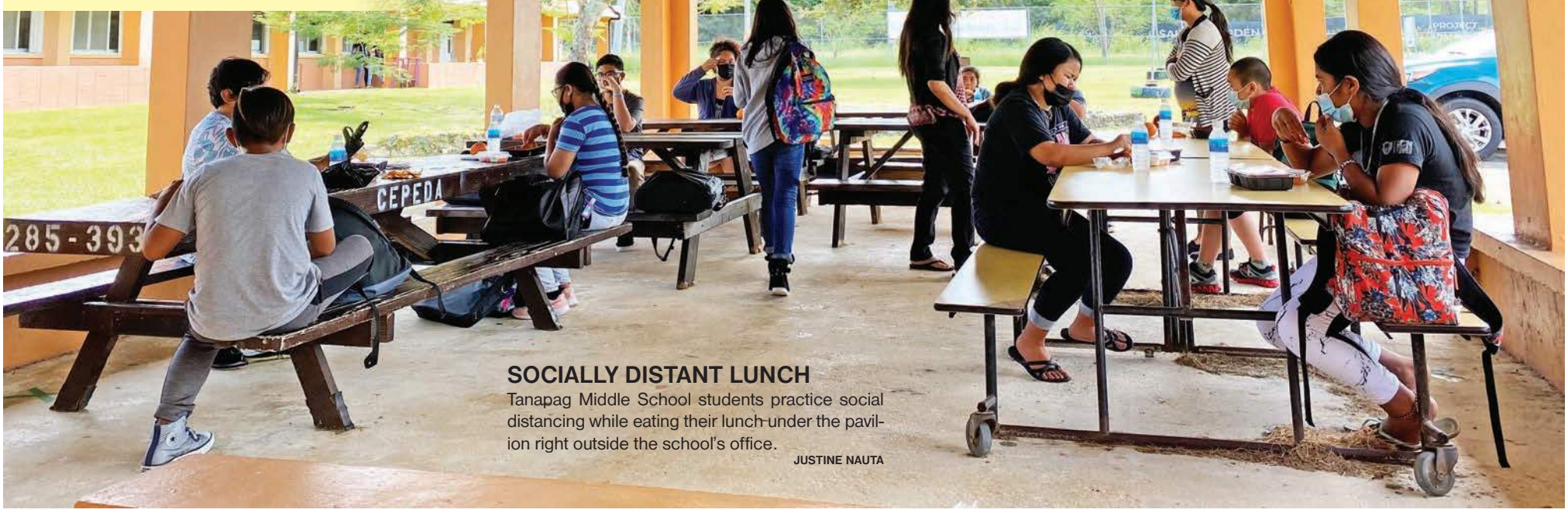

SOCIALLY DISTANT LUNCH
Tanapag Middle School students practice social distancing while eating their lunch under the pavilion right outside the school's office.
JUSTINE NAUTA

IPI wants a payment plan for the consent judgment

» Company says it has no funds to pay consent judgment right now

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Dotts

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI that it would like to set up a payment plan with the U.S. Department of Labor to satisfy the consent judgment because they lack the funds to pay the judgment before the court's deadline.

Michael Dotts, who is representing IPI in this case, informed the federal court that payments owed under the consent judgment have not been

See IPI on Page 4

PSS has 1st day of blended classes

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Public School System kicked off the month of February by welcoming back students on campus, with all schools participating in blended learning—a mix of in-person classes and online instruction.

In an interview with Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School principal Raena Camacho, GTC welcomed back only half of their students to the campus—approximately

See PSS on Page 4

NAP excludes FPUC and stimulus income

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Nutrition Assistance Program under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs will be excluding the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation and the stimulus as income for those applying for food stamps.

NAP administrator Walter Macaranas affirmed in an interview that FPUC and stimulus are not considered countable income.

See NAP on Page 4

'Many on Rota have yet to get PUA'

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Santos

Sen. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) said many people on Rota have yet to receive any Pandemic Unemployment Assistance or Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation payments since they first applied.

In a letter Friday to Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente, Santos said she continues to receive such disheartening news and that some have complained that they have been partially paid and are waiting for past payments.

"More concerning is the

See MANY on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, Feb. 2, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,608	2	7,610
Recovered	7,377	4	7,381
Active	98	2	100
Deaths	129	0	129
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			115,930

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	133	0	133
Traced via Travel Screening	107	0	107
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			167

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

INSIDE

LOCAL
The U.S. Navy is working to restore public access to Chiget Beach on Tinian.
PAGE 6

BUSINESS
White Laundry is a haven for people that wants to work, read, study, and wash their laundry.
PAGE 11

WORLD
Members of Myanmar's Parliament remain confined inside their government housing.
PAGE 13

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Bill to allow civil claims for child sexual abuse is revived

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Joseph Lee Pan Guerrero (R-Saipan) has pre-filed a bill that will allow civil claims for child sexual abuse to be commenced at any time.

Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that he "recycled" the bill of former Saipan senator Sixto Igisomar, who introduced it in 2019. The Senate passed Igisomar's bill in April 2020 and it was subsequently transmitted to the House of Representatives for action but later voted to recall the bill.

Guerrero said the statute of limitations is not fair to victims of sexual abuse. "These perpetrators should be put on the spot," the lawmaker said.

Guerrero stated in H.B. 22-2 that sexual crimes committed against persons under the age of 18 are very sensitive cases that can severely traumatize young victims. Oftentimes, he said, these incidents are left unreported due to the victim's fear of revealing such disturbing information, threats made by the abuser, or familial connections to the abuser. For many child victims, he said, the trauma itself prevents them from coming forward earlier. As adults, the lawmaker said, victims may not connect the assault to its long-lasting impact until they seek therapeutic help years later, often referred to as delayed discovery.

He said criminal prosecution is not barred by a statute of limitations and prosecution may be pursued at any time for a case in which an adult discovers that he or she was a victim of sexual abuse as a child under the age of 18.

Guerrero

Guerrero said the criminal prosecution option remains open regardless of the passage of time, pursuant to the Commonwealth Code.

However, he said, the same option is not available for civil cases involving sexual abuse of victims that occurred when they were under 18 years of age. Most such victims, however, only realize or discover the sexual abuse during their adulthood, after more than six years have elapsed. This type of case, he said, if pursued through civil litigation, is barred by the current six-year statute of limitation under 7 CMC Section 2505.

He said the expiration of applicable statute of limitations for child sexual abuse victims during this period result in barring many meritorious civil claims. Guerrero said this has allowed many child sexual abusers to escape civil liability.

"If evidence is sufficient to prove civil liability, the mere passage of time should not prevent child sexual abuse victims from seeking justice," he said.

See BILL on Page 4

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CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE:

We are here

NO VACCINE
LIMITED SUPPLY — PHASE 1
ADDITIONAL SUPPLY — PHASE 2
BROAD SUPPLY — PHASE 3

6,400 Dose 1 vaccinations have been administered in the CNMI

PHASE 1a
- Healthcare workers, high-risk first responders, homebound/bedbound patients, & Man Amko' (≥65 years).

PHASE 1b EXPANDED TO INCLUDE
- Persons 55 years of age and older.
- Workers part of CNMI infrastructure across public and private sectors: Media & Telecommunications, Food & Agriculture(Grocery store workers, Restaurant/Catering/Bakery workers, and Wholesalers), Transportation Systems, Commercial Facilities, Energy and Utilities, Financial Services, Waste & Water Systems, Education Staff, Faith-Based Leaders, Covid-19 Contractors employed by the CNMI Governor's Task Force, and CNMI (State/Local) Government Employees (All agencies).

How to register & get updates
- **Visit our website** www.vaccinatecnmi.com
- **Call the Vaccinate CNMI Call Center** (670) 682-SHOT (7468)

CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION SCHEDULE
— 02/01/21 - 02/03/21

SAIPAN

Monday, 2/1
TIME: 8am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/11

Tuesday, 2/2
TIME: 8am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/12

Wednesday, 2/3
TIME: 8am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/13

Dose 1 vaccinations are limited per day. Go online to register at **vaccinatecnmi.com** or call the Vaccinate CNMI Call Center at **(670) 683-SHOT**/7468 to secure a vaccination spot.

Phase 1b dose 1 vaccination depends upon verification of employment status by CHCC and daily capacity.

LOCATION: CHCC - MCATS tents located across from the Emergency Room.

PARKING: Parking lot is located across the CHCC campus on Navy Hill Road.

TINIAN
Residents on Tinian from Phase 1a were vaccinated on January 17, 2021 with dose 1 of 2. A new vaccination schedule for Tinian is coming soon.

ROTA
Residents on Rota from Phase 1a were vaccinated on January 24, 2021 with dose 1 of 2. A new vaccination schedule for Rota is coming soon.

What to Bring
1. **Vaccination ID** (Located in confirmation email)
2. **Government Issued ID** (e.g, driver's license or passport)
3. **Employee ID** or latest paystub (Phase 1b only)
4. **Insurance Card** (If applicable)
5. DOSE 2 recipients must also bring their **Vaccination Record Card** (please make your appointment date even if you misplace your card)

VACCINATE CNMI CALL CENTER: (670) 682-SHOT / Mon-Sun 7am-10pm VACCINATE CNMI WEBSITE REGISTRATION: vaccinatecnmi.com @cnmichcc

PSS: Central govt still owes $4.7M

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI government still owes the Public School System $$4.7 million for fiscal year 2021, which started last October, according to PSS finance director Arlene Lizama.

In her report to the Board of Education at its meeting last Thursday, Lizama disclosed that the administration was supposed to transfer $8 million to PSS by Jan. 27, based on the fiscal year 2021 budget or Public Law 21-35, but failed to do so and the Department of Finance only managed to transfer just $3.25 million by Jan. 15. This means the central government is short by $4.75 million.

PSS was approved for $24.3 million for fiscal year 2021, yet Finance had transferred only $500,000 of the PSS local budget last Dec. 31, 2020, Lizama said. She added that only 11.6%, or $1,017,894, of the $3.25 million that was transferred last Jan. 15 has been expended. Those encumbrances included $653,000 for the Micronesia Renewable Energy project, she added.

Lizama's slide presentation indicated that the central government failed to transfer the entire amount that is due to PSS every month.

Also speaking at the board meeting, BOE vice chair Herman Atalig said that the last time he heard from Finance Secretary David Atalig, he was told that the transfer of funds is based on the government's revenue collection weekly/biweekly and that Atalig had assured that PSS would get a 25% share of any amount the government collects in any particular week.

BOE chair Andrew L. Orsini said they will work with the Legislature on this issue. "I think it is best that we also address this funding issue with the Legislature, and see how we can work something out. The sooner, the better. Maybe there are other means the Legislature can look into to help us with the situation we are facing right now," he said.

7 interested in Managaha railing project

Seven companies have expressed interest in a federally funded project to install a railing on the Managaha Island's pier.

Deveney Dela Cruz, who is the Department of Public Lands special assistant, said that seven companies participated in a "question & answer" session at DPL's conference room yesterday morning on the Managaha Island Rehabilitation Project.

"The companies have the bidding packages and will need to submit [the requirements]," said Dela Cruz in response to *Saipan Tribune*'s inquiry about the meeting with the companies.

Dela Cruz, DPL compliance director Greg Deleon Guerrero, and DPW highway engineer Isagani Salazar hosted the Q&A for the companies interested in submitting a bid for the project.

DPL, which was awarded $220,652 from the Office of Insular Affairs for this purpose, wants to install a railing along the Managaha pier to ensure the safety of people who visit the site.

The Managaha pier, which juts directly from the island into deeper waters, has had no railings since being built.

DPL has until August 2021 to complete the project. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Guam sees low CAR score

Guam saw its lowest COVID-19 Area Risk score last week, even as 26 people tested positive for COVID-19 last Feb. 1.

According to the Joint Information Center, 21 new cases of COVID-19 were identified out of 895 test that was performed by the Department of Public Health and Social Service last Sunday, Jan. 31, plus tests from additional laboratories from Jan. 29 to 31.

Eighteen cases reported recent travel history and were identified in quarantine, and one case was identified through contact tracing.

Guam has been seeing a trend of fewer people testing positive for COVID-19 in the last few weeks. Guam's CAR's score, which indicates the prevalence of infections in an area, reached 0.6 last week. Guam's long-term CAR score goal is to be under 2.5.

In the middle part of 2020, Guam saw back-to-back deaths every other day but the territory has lately been seeing fewer deaths. The last reported death from JIC a week ago when Guam saw its 129th death, a 50-year-old man who had underlying health conditions. He died at Guam Memorial Hospital at 2:07am last Monday, JIC reported. He was admitted to the hospital on Dec. 22 and was a known positive case.

As of Feb. 2, JIC reported that Guam continues its vaccination roll-out and community-based testing. ***(Justine Nauta)***

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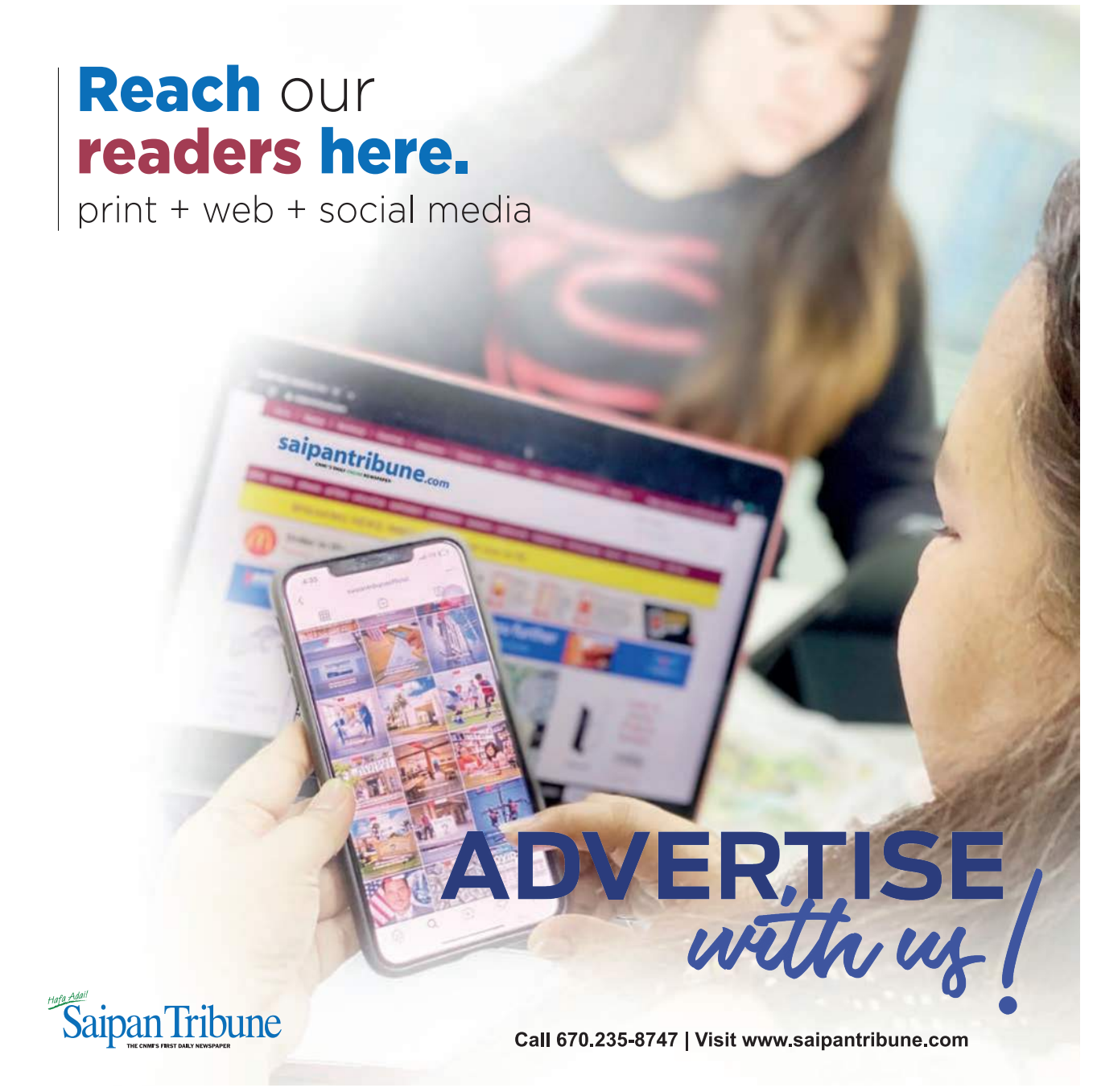
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$3K bail for man who allegedly threatened wife

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
limberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a $3,000 cash bail on a man who allegedly threatened his wife, resisted arrest, and assaulted a police officer who was trying to arrest him.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho imposed a $3,000 cash bail on Manuel Santos Aguon, 67, last Thursday during his bail hearing.

After the bail hearing, Aguon was remanded to the custody of the Department of Corrections.

Aguon was charged with assault, disturbing the peace, assault and battery, and resisting arrest.

According to court documents, Aguon had told his wife that he no longer wants to be with her and that he was moving out because he has already found a place to live. He then asked her for $200 to help him with the move but she told him that she would give him the money once he moves all his things out from her house on Navy Hill.

After Aguon moved all his things, he went to her workplace in San Antonio and received $200 from his wife.

Later in the evening, however, the victim said Aguon showed up at her place, asking to let him in but she refused and told him to "come back when you're sober."

Aguon then called her on her cellphone and said, "You want to die! You better not come outside! Watch it!" he said.

His wife told him to stop threatening her, adding that she would call the police but Aguon said he didn't care.

When one of the responding police officers tried to arrest Aguon, he yanked his arm away and asked what he was being arrested for. The officer told Aguon that he was being arrested for disturbing the peace and assault, but Aguon refused to comply.

As the officers tried to put Aguon in the police vehicle, police said Aguon kicked one of the arresting officers in the face and on the right bicep.

PSS

From Page 1

167 students—while the other half attended online classes. GTC has a total of 335 enrolled students.

Camacho said that GTC started preparing for in-person learning last summer. "...Actually, for half of our student population, it's not something new because we've been implementing the intervention sessions since October, so half of our kids have been here, [while] for the other half, this this is basically their first day of school here on campus," said Camacho.

Because elementary schools are more into collaborative learning, or group work, Camacho stated that some of the adjustments they had to make were setting up dividers, and putting desks 6 feet apart, to make sure that GTC meets the social distancing requirement. GTC also has a temperature reading, along with sanitizers everywhere.

Camacho said that it has been a little trickier with children because they have to think about how to ensure the 6-foot requirement for lunch and recess. "We don't allow [eating] in the cafeteria, unless we can, of course, accommodate the spacing. …From what I know, all elementary schools, at least with us here, the students are eating in their classrooms," said Camacho.

As for recess, because it's only a 10-minute recess, Camacho stated that they staggered their recess period at 10 minutes each and divided the children into groups. "We have one group recess and we kind of split our field into areas so that all the groups remain with their group and are not having any crowding anywhere," she said.

Tanapag Middle School

As for middle school, Tanapag Middle School principal Hilda Rios stated that they welcomed back approximately 150 students yesterday, while the other half are online. TMS has about 305 students in all.

Back then, when face-to-face classes were only for students who needed it, TMS could only accommodate 10 students in the classroom. This time, Rios said, they can accommodate 10 to 13 students in each classroom.

Just like elementary schools, TMS has been preparing for the resumption of face-to-face classes since last summer. "We've been preparing for this slowly but surely. We have to make sure that all our safety measures are in place, our protocols are in place. We have to look at our population, our number of kids, first, so that we know how many students we can put into classrooms if we do have that space," said Rios.

Rios added that all protocols, such as wearing of face masks, social distancing, and temperature checks are in place. Because wearing a mask can be harder for children, Rios allowed her teachers to give students a break when they need to "take a breather."

"Face masks are definitely worn throughout the day. I do allow my teachers to give some flexibility for students to walk out of the classroom sometimes if they're having a hard time with their mask on because having this on an entire day can be very difficult. So students are allowed to ask their teachers to take a step out and just kind of just take a breather, count to 30 seconds or so, then go back in and proceed with class. Those are some of the flexibility we allow," said Rios. Only one student at a time can go out of the classroom.

As for the temperature checks, Rios said each student is checked before entering the classroom. If a student's temperature is over 100º, the student is sent to the school office where their temperature will be double-checked. If it's good, the student returns to class; if not, they will be isolated.

"Anytime a student is shown to have a temperature that is higher than 100º, they go to the office [and] we double-check their temperature. If it's just a misreading of the temperature, we send them back to the classroom. Otherwise, we have an isolation room where we put kids and go through the process," said Rios.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

NAP

From Page 1

"We won't be requiring households to declare their FPUC payments. ...[but] if you are receiving other than that, then we would ask for the income that you're receiving," said Macaranas.

Also, college students who are receiving food stamps on behalf of their family while also receiving the Free Application for Federal Student Aid scholarship, FAFSA, won't have to declare it as income.

It's a different matter for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

Macaranas stated that people who are receiving PUA must declare that as an income since it's a monthly payment, or a source of income.

Another source of income that won't be counted is the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker income for those who don't meet the citizenship requirement. "CWs, in a sense, are not necessarily U.S. citizens, so that means that they wouldn't qualify under that particular criteria. …They're dependents. ...Their children, who are U.S. citizens, can avail of the program based on submitting an application for their children," said Macaranas.

Peak of beneficiaries

The NAP program saw its peak number of beneficiaries last July 2020, with a total of 5,300 families. Macaranas hopes to see the same number of beneficiaries by the end of the month since NAP increased its eligibility and benefit levels.

As of Feb. 2, NAP has under 4,000 families in the program, and distributing a total of $1.5 million a month. "The numbers are going to go up. ...Right now we're issuing benefits at just under $1.5 million. We're looking at issuing about an additional $1 million per month in the following months," said Macaranas.

He said the program will be helpful for those who are still having a rough time getting back on their feet with no work and students who are going back to school.

NAP was approved last week to increase its income eligibility standards and the maximum monthly benefit allotments. The changes took effect Monday. Macaranas said Saipan's benefit allotment will increase 41.5% for a household of four.

IPI

From Page 1

paid and that IPI has insufficient funds to pay them now.

Dotts also reported that no agreement has been reached on a deposit to an escrow account to secure payment of future payrolls.

"IPI lacks funds to make the deposit that the U.S. Department of Labor has requested," he said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona found IPI, its parent company Imperial Pacific International Holdings Ltd., and IPI chair Cui Li Jie in contempt of court for violating the consent judgment and for not paying current employees for over two months.

The sanctions imposed to purge IPI of contempt include a payment of $788,022.54 in wages due to current IPI employees; $1.3 million in wages and overtime compensation for services rendered in 2016 and 2017; restoring employee housing to habitable conditions; and depositing $800,000 into an escrow account for future employees.

The court originally issued a one-week stop-work order for all IPI employees except for administrative staff, kitchen staff, and security. Last week, Manglona extended the stop-work order and amended it to apply only to IPI's construction workers.

Dotts told the court that IPI workers' salaries for payroll periods 21 through 26 were distributed last Jan. 21.

As for payroll for 2021, Dotts said a partial distribution for pay periods 1 and 2 took place last Wednesday.

Paychecks for payroll period 3 for 2021 were supposed to be distributed on Jan. 29. However, funding for pay period 3 has not yet been received.

In regards to company housing, Dotts reported that power and water have been restored to the housing for IPI's employees.

Vestcor Village, however, is being closed down and the employees living there will be transferred to Queens Apartment in Garapan, which has water and power.

MANY

From Page 1

fact that many recipients have stated that payment dates are reflected online, but in reality have never received a direct deposit or paper check disbursement on the specified date or weeks after," she said.

The senator recommends decentralizing the application process and all other requirements necessary to facilitate the pre-approval and approval, which she said can be easily accomplished in their respective senatorial district.

Santos said many are confused by the online information and are concerned that they might not get paid at all.

She cited Labor's press release published in the *Saipan Tribune* last Dec. 28 that stated: "As of the date of this release, barring any non-payments due to claim errors, the CNMI DOL and Department of Finance is up to date with all paper check and direct deposit disbursements and are currently working on December 2020, payment cycle."

If the delay is caused by claim errors/issues or have been flagged for further investigation, Santos asked Labor to expedite the process to resolve these discrepancies so that people can receive their disbursements.

"If no such errors exist, please expedite the release of their disbursements," she said, adding that she empathize with the people's struggle because the cost of living on Rota is notably higher.

The senator said her request shouldn't be construed to mean disbursing payment to the people of Rota first, because all eligible applicant shouldn't have to wait this long to receive their payment or some form of communication from Labor about the delay.

Santos said in the very near future, Labor will be reopening its PUA Program and that she is hopeful that the department will resolve all pending errors/issues/flags and have expected disbursements released immediately.

She urged Benavente to take this time to streamline Labor's system to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness so disbursements can be made in a timely manner.

Sen. Karl King-Nabors (R-Tinian), the newly appointed chairman of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Government, Law and Federal Relations, and other committee members will be meeting with Benavente today, Wednesday at 1:30pm, at the Senate chamber to hear about the status of PUA and FPUC.

The senator said they want to also hear from Benavente regarding the status of the unemployment insurance benefit.

Sen. Edith E. Deleon Guerrero (D-Saipan) stated during the inauguration of the 22nd Legislature Jan. 11 that, as of the Dec. 16, 2020, the CNMI has $6.69 million in PUA and FPUC funds available for disbursement, and that these funds are supposed to be disbursed on a weekly basis.

Deleon Guerrero, who is a former Labor secretary, said thousands of individuals are still waiting for their weekly PUA and PFUC benefits.

BILL

From Page 2

The lawmaker said his bill would amend Title 7 of the Commonwealth Code to add a new section to authorize civil claims for child sexual abuse to be commenced at any time. The new section states that "any claim arising from an incident of child sexual abuse may be commenced against a person, a legal entity, abusers, their enablers, their aiders or abettors, or those acting in concert with them and their institutions at any time."

The new section also states that "any claim arising from an incident of child sexual abuse that occurred in the [CNMI] which has been barred by virtue of the expiration of the previous civil statute of limitations shall be permitted to be filed in any court of competent jurisdiction."

Guerrero filed the bill last Jan. 22. Reps. Denita Yangetmai (D-Saipan), Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan), vice speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan), and five others co-authored the bill.

Dry weather is already impacting CUC's water supply

The dry season in the Northern Marianas, which begins in December and ends in June, is already having an effect on the water supply of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

According to a statement yesterday, CUC said the dry weather condition is impacting its normal balancing act of excess-to-sufficient supply volumes from the CUC well fields.

With the current number of projects in play and the dry season beginning, CUC takes on an additional task of monitoring volume of water supply and how best to distribute water for each Tank Service Area.

For example, the Agag well and Donni Spring, which draws from the same aquifer, are not producing its normal water production due to supply or less rainfall. As a result, supply to the Capital Hill area is decreased which lowers tank levels in the Capital Hill, Rapagao, Puerto Rico, and Calhoun tanks and lower pressures being delivered to those customers.

Essentially, as the height of water in the tank rises at night, the pressure rises until consumption exceeds supply and the pressures fall off. Flow from Agag and Donni Spring needs to increase to satisfy normal pressures and supply to Capital Hill, Rapagao, Puerto Rico, and Calhoun.

CUC has the same issues with the San Vicente tank supply level because of the newly started capital project to replace San Vicente Tank with a new and larger 750,000-gallon tank. The recently completed temporary tank of 70,000 gallons has been connected to the distribution system for the San Vicente area and it also feeds the Obyan area, which is on scheduled water hours between 9am and 3pm daily. During this time, the Dandan area is affected by lower pressures because the supply is gravity-fed to Obyan to provide them with adequate supply for six hours each day.

The San Vicente tank supply source comes primarily from Kagman through the Papago tank and Kumoi booster. CUC is close to completing the new Kagman Booster Station with an improved pumping system, but the completion date has been extended from October 2020 to April 2021 because of a problem at the manufacturer of the control system, which cannot be rushed and delivery was impacted resulting in a delay in the time as well. The new booster station will double the available volume of water to Papago and then San Vicente as early as April which will improve pressures for San Vicente and potentially the Dandan and Obyan areas.

Even prior to this issue, CUC's water supply was already faced with the shutdown of 10 wells in its Isley and Obyan well fields near the airport, which had high levels of PFOA/PFOS contaminants, which had to be turned off to avoid causing negative health impacts to its customers. The project is now on course to begin installation of the 10 granular activated carbon units in mid-February which, as each is completed, a well can be returned to service and improve supply to the As Terlaje water tank that serves Kannat Tabla tank as well. This alone will allow CUC to begin redistributing water to various adjacent TSA's to help improve supply and pressures for the overall system.

CUC will be monitoring the supply levels as the dry season carries on and may at some time require scheduling water for an area of the customer service area based on the status of the wells and supply to the various tanks.

"This is a constant balancing act as we pull water from one service area to another but it can be managed and supplies extended suitably to meet the demand of our customers," a CUC statement said.

Also, at the present time, CHCC has full tank levels available to it and the backup well is working if needed.

Customers are advised to contact CUC's Call Center at (670) 664-4282 for additional information and/or any problems affecting the water system.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.faceBooLcom/CommonwealthUti I itiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***

Public warned of dangerous sea conditions

A high surf advisory remains in effect through tonight, Wednesday, while a high rip current risk is in effect through Monday night. Also, a small craft advisory is in effect through Thursday afternoon.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, the high surf advisory for north facing reefs expects hazardous surf of 7 to 9 feet and dangerous rip currents, and hazardous surf of 9 to 12 feet and dangerous rip currents in east facing reefs.

These conditions will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and local beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

Residents of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are advised to avoid venturing out near reef lines facing north and east facing reefs. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

Meanwhile, east winds of 20 to 25 knots and seas of 8 to 12 feet are expected in Marianas coastal waters until 6pm Thursday. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft. Highest winds and seas will be on Tinian and Saipan waters, then will spread southward. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in hazardous conditions. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-017

CNMI STREETLIGHT EFFICIENCY PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of Light Emitting Diode (LED) streetlight luminaires to promote energy and cost saving measures on the power distribution system in Saipan and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded from the United states Department of the Interior (USDOIA).

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-21-017, CNMI Streetlight Efficiency Project)"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on March 4, 2021** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 10, 2021** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Adrian Reyes, CUC Power Division Engineer via email adrian.reyes@cucgov.org; Alfred Palattao, CUC Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal if in its sole opinion to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 21-01
United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands

Generalist Clerk

Permanent, Full-Time Position
Location: SAIPAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (CNMI)
Starting grade: CL-22 step 1 to CL-23 Step 25 ($31,755 to $49,195 includes 12.62% COLA)
(With promotional potential to CL-24.)
Opening Date: February 1, 2021 • Applications received by February 8, 2021 will be given priority.

Position Overview:
Incumbent will perform various functions in supporting court operations, including maintaining and processing case information, and assistance in handling progression of cases to final disposition. Incumbent also performs duties including customer service, cashier intake, review and image scanning of civil, criminal, and bankruptcy documents which are the official record of the Court. Assists with shelving of law library materials. Performs other support duties as assigned. Complete position description is available upon request, or via Internet at https://www.nmid.uscourts.gov. This position includes full federal employment benefits, with paid leave and holidays, health insurance, life insurance and federal retirement benefits.

Minimum Qualifications and Preferred Qualifications:
High school graduate or equivalent with at least two years of general work experience. Education above the high school level may be substituted for required general experience. Additional preference will be given for college graduate and work experience in a court or legal environment. Applicants should demonstrate sound ethics and judgment, be able to communicate effectively (orally and in writing), and be skilled in word processing, spreadsheets, and be trainable in using automated systems. Additional preference will be given for skill in using automated case management systems. Successful completion of an aptitude test may be required.

Citizenship Requirement:
Applicants are required to be U.S. citizens or aliens who are authorized to work in the U.S.

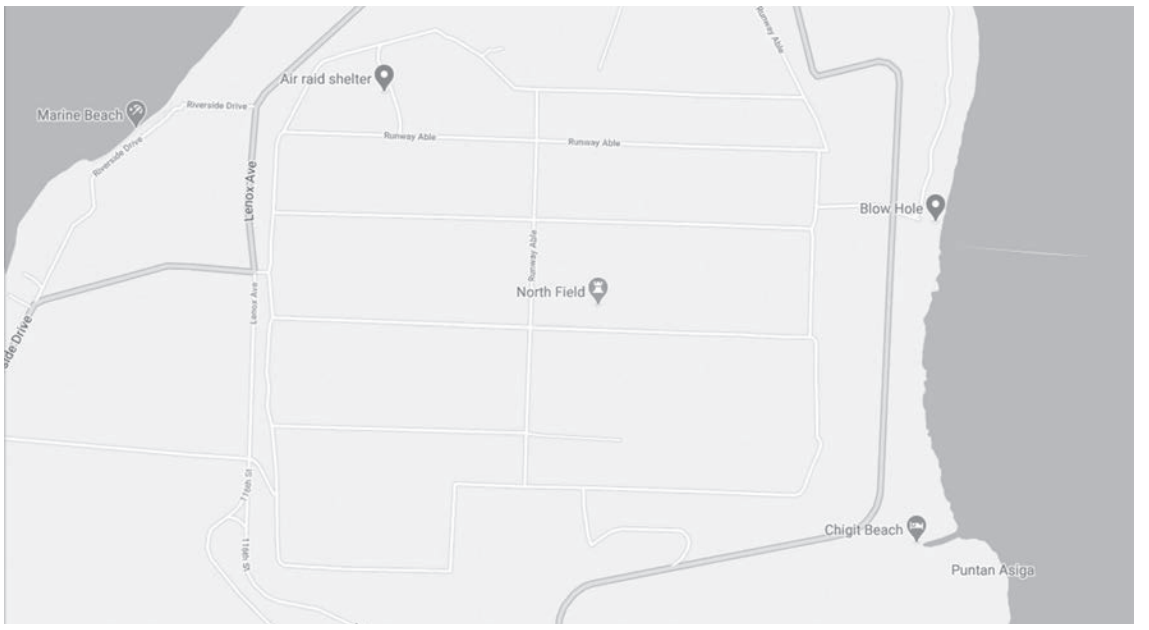
Notice to Applicants:
Excepted service appointments are "at will" and may be terminated by either the court or the employee at any time for any reason. Selectees will be subject to a background check or investigation and suitability determination; and may be subject to an updated background investigations every five years. Employees are subject to the Judicial Code of Conduct. Direct deposit of pay is required.

Application Procedure:
Each applicant is required to submit a Cover Letter, Resume, and an AO-78 application form. AO-78 forms are on the Internet at: https://www.nmid.uscourts.gov or may be picked up at the U.S. District Court. Position is open until filled; applications received by February 8, 2021 will be given priority.

We prefer you to email signed applications to:
HR@nmid.uscourts.gov

You may deliver signed applications to:
Clerk of Court
United States District Court
for the Northern Mariana Islands
3rd Floor, United States Courthouse, Gualo Rai, Saipan

The United States District Court is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



This screenshot of a Google Maps image shows where the Unai Chiget, or Chiget Beach, is located on the island of Tinian.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Navy works to restore public access to Tinian's Chiget beach

ASAN, Guam—Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Pacific and NAVFAC Marianas, in partnership with the CNMI government, are working to restore public access to Chiget Beach at the former Tinian Mortar Range.

What was once part of a World War II battlefield, the mortar range was used as a training facility from 1945 to 1994. Following several site visits and assessments over the years, a remedial investigation began in 2015.

"The range falls under the Department of the Navy's Environmental Restoration Program, as an identified Munitions Response Program site, with the objective to clean up sites impacted by past military usage." said Gregg Ikehara, NAVFAC Marianas remedial project manager. "All bases in the U.S. have been moving toward the cleanup of both installation restoration and munitions response sites, which include former ranges, disposal areas, old dumpsites, storage areas and maintenance sites to protect human health and the environment from contamination due to past Navy usage, which would make property available for future needs."

A non-time critical removal action was started in 2018, and field work began in November 2020 in an effort to restore access to the beach.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres expressed his appreciation to the U.S. Department of Defense for their commitment in moving the project forward.

"The Chiget range has been a persistent issue for the people of the Tinian and the CNMI as a whole," said Torres. "I am pleased that the remediation work is finally happening. I thank Major Gen. Suzie Vares-Lum and Rear Adm. John Menoni for their partnership is seeing this through and look forward to its successful completion and for the eventual opening of the Chiget Beach for access by our Tinian residents and visitors alike."

At the request of the current and former Tinian mayors, and the community's desire to gain eventual unencumbered access to the beach for recreation and tourism, the Navy chose to address the Chiget Beach portion first before cleaning up the larger part of the remaining range as a consideration to the local community.

"Providing access to Chiget Beach for the people of Tinian is meaningful as that beach holds sentimental value considering our history on the island," said Tinian Mayor Edwin Aldan. "With the Navy stepping in to assist with the removal of munitions, the short-term impact to the community is that the people currently do not have access to the beach. In the long run, the benefits resulting from the Navy's work outweigh the short-term impact considering that all munitions and explosives are addressed and removed for future generations to come."

A working group composed of Department of Defense partners, the Tinian mayor's office, CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coast Quality, and the Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs regularly meet to discuss updates on project progression.

"In support of the longstanding desire of our leaders and people of Tinian to gain eventual unencumbered access to the beach for recreation and tourism, Gov. Torres elevated his efforts through the Section 902 Consultation process and through the partnership that the governor, Mayor Aldan and the Tinian leadership built over the years with the DoD," said Glenna Sakisat Palacios, CBMA special assistant. "On behalf of Gov. Torres and Lt. Gov. [Arnold I.] Palacios, I would like to thank all members of the working group for the collaboration with our office, the mayor's office and BECQ." ***(USN)***

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM-042

SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 26, 2021 TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF THREE (3) NEW PICK-UP TRUCK 4WD/4-FULL-DOORS FOR THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARNINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ, F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547 | FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEY FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION, Plaintiff, -v- AGRIPINA J. GIODA and MICHAEL J. GIODA, Defendants) CIVIL ACTION NO. 18-0103

NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on January 4, 2021, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property:

Legal Description of the Property:
Lot no. 011 G 264, situated in Kagman III, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 750 square meters, more or less, as shown on the Division of Lands and Surveys Official Cadastral Plat no. 011 G 06 dated December 1, 1993, Commonwealth Recorder's File no. 93-4414, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Total Area of the Property:
750 square meters, more or less

Known encumbrances: None.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Monday, February 15, 2021, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public. Copies of a title insurance report for the properties are available to any prospective bidder upon request.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 11th day of January, 2021:

/s/
MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

Joey P. San Nicolas
P.O. Box 10,001 PMB 602, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7659 | Fax: (670) 234-9218
Email: jp.tinian@gmail.com

Pro Se Petitioner Joey P. San Nicolas

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: PETRA PANGELINAN SAN NICOLAS, Decedent.) Civil Action No.: CA-21-0009-CV) NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TO: ALL HEIRS, DEVISEES, LEGATEES AND CREDITORS OF: PETRA PANGELINAN SAN NICOLAS

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the petition of JOEY P. SAN NICOLAS for the issuance of letters of administration of this estate will be heard before the Honorable Joseph N. Camacho, Associate Judge, on the 18th day of February, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. at the CNMI Superior Court, Courtroom 202A, Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear at the hearing and show cause, if any, why the order should not be made.

For further particulars, please refer to the Petition on file herein, or contact Petitioner, Joey P. San Nicolas, P.O. Box 10,001 PMB 602, Saipan, MP 96950; telephone no. (670) 234-7659 and email jp.tinian@gmail.com.

Pursuant to Rule 21, NMI R. Prob. P., notice is hereby given to all creditors of the decedent, PETRA PANGELINAN SAN NICOLAS, or of her estate, that they must file their claims with the Clerk of the Superior Court, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, within sixty (60) days of the first publication of this Notice, or the claims will be forever barred.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM/CRB-044

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) NEW PICK-UP TRUCK 4WD/4-FULL-DOORS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLES (ROTA BRANCH) UNDER THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARNINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO MR. EPIPHANIO CABRERA, ADMINISTRATOR OF OGM, VIA EMAIL TO epi.cabrera@gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS **FEBRUARY 19, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL **NOT** BE ENTERTAINED. QUESTIONS/AMSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL BIDDERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM/CRB-045

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF TWO (2) NEW UTILITY SIDE-BY-SIDE VEHICLES DOORS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLES (ROTA BRANCH) UNDER THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARNINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO MR. EPIPHANIO CABRERA, ADMINISTRATOR OF OGM, VIA EMAIL TO epi.cabrera@gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS **FEBRUARY 19, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL **NOT** BE ENTERTAINED. QUESTIONS/AMSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL BIDDERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
2390 Beach Road, Oleai CDA Bldg., Unit 205, P.O. Box 502149, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. Nos: (670) 234-7145/7146/6293/6245 • Fax No.: (670) 235-7147
Website: www.developcnmi.com

INVITATION FOR BIDS 2021-CDA-04-IFB

CLOSING DATE: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 • TIME: 10:00 am

"JANITORIAL and LAWN CARE SERVICES"

Copies of the proposal package may be picked up at the 2390 Beach Road Oleai, CDA Bldg., Unit 205, Saipan during regular working hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays, and on our website.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTIONS 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any and all bids and proposals in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a bid in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/ **MANUEL A. SABLAN**
Executive Director

/s/ **FRANCISCO C. AGUON**
Acting Director, Procurement & Supply

Manibusan joins coalition to urge FDA to ban menthol cigarettes

CNMI Attorney General Edward Manibusan has signed on to a letter penned by a bipartisan coalition of 23 attorneys general that calls on the Food and Drug Administration to ban menthol cigarettes.

The coalition, led by Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul and Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wasden, argued in the letter that a ban on menthol cigarettes would benefit public health overall, decrease youth smoking, and help mitigate the harm that disproportionately affects minority communities caused by these products.

The letter asks the FDA to complete rulemaking to prohibit menthol cigarettes. The coalition argued that such a prohibition would save thousands of lives and should be implemented immediately. Despite the overall decline in non-menthol smoking, the coalition pointed out that the prevalence of menthol smoking has remained constant in recent years—and disproportionately impacts youth and minority populations. The attorneys general stated that menthol cigarettes remain a major barrier to smoking cessation and the reduction of smoking-related health conditions.

"The FDA must act immediately to ban menthol cigarettes. The scientific research shows that menthol is a starting point for youth who begin smoking and become addicted and that these products disproportionately affect communities of color," said Connecticut Attorney General William Tong, one of the coalition members. "We are supportive of the proposals in the Connecticut General Assembly to ban the sale of these products in-state and a federal ban would save thousands of lives and improve public health outcomes across the nation."

In the letter, the attorneys general also highlighted the FDA's own data showing the addictiveness of menthol cigarettes.

Joining Raoul, Wasden, and Tong in submitting the letter are the attorneys general of Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, the Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. ***(https://cstoredecisions.com/)***

Xerox seeks default judgment vs IPI

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Xerox Corp. Saipan has asked the court to enter a default judgment against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC for failing to respond to its lawsuit within the time allowed.

David Banes, who represents Xerox, is asking the court to issue an order in its favor awarding them $182,905.88 for damages plus late charges and interest.

In Banes' declaration filed with the request for entry of default, he said IPI was served with the summons and complaint on Dec. 31, 2020, but IPI has not served a responsive pleading nor filed a motion within the time provided by the federal rules of civil procedure.

Xerox filed the lawsuit with the U.S. District Court for the NMI against IPI on Dec. 23, 2020, for allegedly not paying for services rendered and equipment it rented. Xerox sued IPI for breach of contract, unjust enrichment, and quantum meruit. The lawsuit demanded the return of the devices and related equipment rented to IPI, and attorney's fees and costs.

According to court documents, Xerox entered into a services master agreement with IPI on Feb. 26, 2016. IPI agreed to pay Xerox for services provided to IPI and its affiliates within 30 days of the corresponding invoice.

IPI also agreed to pay Xerox a late charge or 5% of the amount overdue (but not to exceed the maximum amount permitted by law) if Xerox did not receive a payment within 10 days of the due date.

Xerox could also recover interest at the rate of 1.5% per month on amounts due and immediately terminate its services if Xerox did not receive a payment within 15 days of the due date the lawsuit stated.

Xerox said it provided services and products to IPI, including printing device rental, and provision of related equipment, supplies, and customer services.

However, as of the date of the complaint, IPI has not paid all the invoices of Xerox when due, the complaint stated.

Want to become a cop?

The CNMI Police Academy is now accepting applications and is looking to enroll 21 interested cadets.

Applicants must first pass an English 101 test administered by the Northern Marianas College. The last police academy was held back in 2019.

Applicants must obtain their applications from the CNMI Office of Personnel Management in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai and submit the application to the same office no later than Feb. 8.

OPM will apply the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by the NMI Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability, or place of origin.

The salary will be determined by the qualification of the appointee.

The minimum requirement to qualify for the position is a high school diploma; no work experience is required. Applicant must attach their degree to their application along with a police clearance. Failure to provide these documents will result in automatic disqualification.

Cadets will participate in basic training on criminal and traffic laws, patrol/traffic investigative techniques, policies, and procedure, and must participate in class and field instruction. ***(Kimberly Bautista)***

SIS ACADEMIC ACHIEVERS

HONOR'S LIST
Recognizes outstanding academic achievement of all students in grades 6-12 who have a semester grade point average of 3.40-3.69. Grade point averages are rounded to the hundredth place only. Therefore, an average of 3.38 does not round up to a 3.40.

Grade 1
Sophia Santana

Grade 2
Tristan Kurt Bertoncini
Mo Tai Zhang
Yiyi Guo
Jiung Huh
Michelle Im

Grade 3
Aiden Vicente Atalig
Quido Jambor
Yun Hee Woo
Yu Peng
Jude Rayphand

Grade 4
Jin Lee
Daniel Riley Antonio

Grade 5
Malia Corinne Rayphand
Nanako Sakamoto
Qi Peng

Grade 6
Brendan Derocher
Phoenix Sapphire Gross

Grade 7
Benjamin Blanco

Grade 8
Mark Cao
William Sosa
Yejin Son
Christian Newman

Grade 9
Rex Pixley
Andrew Chung
Jayden Shin

Grade 10
Guohao Li
Qiyue Zhang
Hazel Guerrero

Grade 11
Kuu Nishimura
Chia Hui Wang

HEADMASTER'S LIST
Recognizes outstanding academic achievement of all students in grades 6-12 who have a semester grade point average of 3.70-4.00. Grade point averages are rounded to the hundredth place only. Therefore, an average of 3.68 does not round up to a 3.70.

Grade 1
Aileen Kim
Carver Javid Gross
Christopher Chen
David Culwell
Gabriel James Walsh
Guy Pudney
Man Yi Wang
Tucker Darr
William Epley
Zia Hwang

Grade 2
Arthur Villaluz
Chloe Park
Jae Hun Choi
Jake Duenas
Neveah Arriola
Steve Huang Zeng
Windsor Amethyst Gross
Xin Chen Wang

Grade 3
Carlina Maras
Diana Culwell
Jenna Pascual
Juny Kim
Leilani Ruszala

Grade 4
Alleena Villaluz
Beatrice Pearl Gross
Dean Duenas
Elizabeth Culp
Faith Arriola
Finn Altizer
Jiayi Li
Keoni Ruszala
Michael Jan Frederic Guintu
Seojeong Chang
Taewoong Lee
William Hasselback
Ye Won Huh
Yi Ming Li
Yutaro Kitagawa

Grade 5
Landon Pudney
Lya Kim
Theo Jace Joab
Wei Fan Li

Grade 6
Daniel Jayvon Joab
Jason Yu
Zi Hao Zhou

Grade 7
Dong Gyu Lee
Dong Hyun Lee
Hoo Wang
Irin Chung
Jung Won Huh
Scarlett Kim

Grade 8
Charlene Taeyi Son
Hannah Lim
Ian Song
Jin Hee Woo
Kyla Park
Martha Culp
Omari Joseph Joab
Savita Sikkel
Seungeun Ha

Grade 9
Andrew Sablan
Claire Park
Da Soung Kim
Grace Quichocho
Hou Loi
Jinie Thompson
Jayden Shin
John Linden
Li Sha Lai
Lian Qi Li
Olivia (Junghyun) Hwang
Pyper Liske-Clark
Seiyul Hong
Seo Hee Lee
Serin Chung
Stephanie Kim
Taekyoung (Kevin) Kim
Yeawon Kim
Yebin Shin

Grade 10
Francine Joie Asedillo
Huiwon Jeong
Hyeonbo Shim
Jesus Sablan
Kexuan Yu
Lin Xi Cai
Samuel Culp
Tiana Estelle Zi Qing Cabrera
Xin Chen
Yunwoo Nam

Grade 11
Arabella Elouise Loste
Cevina Hwang
Hyeonbin Jeong
Hyeonjae Park
Hyunmin Cho
James Zeng
Jimin Woo
Joobin Kim
Julianne Dane Hall
Matthew Berline
Rachel Shin
Sean Lee
Seunghyun Kim
Susan Chen

Grade 12
Ariya Mcguire
Chen Paul Xiong
Eunbi Choi
Frederic Dean Michael Guintu
Gaeul Kim
Geonho Lee
Guy Yeon Kim
Jason Sablan
Jinju Thompson
Kwangjo Lim
Maury Zon Tybaco
Samantha Liske-Clark
Wonji Kim
Wonwoo Nam
Yeonkyoung No
Zhourui Han

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-043

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

"CNMI CORAL NURSERY OUT-PLANTING AND UP-SELLING PROJECT FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFTEY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO **MR. ZACHARY WILLIAMS** AT zwilliams@dcrm.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS FEBRUARY 19, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-041

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"CNMI WETLAND DELINEATION TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO **THE DCRM PLANNING TEAM** AT planning@dcrm.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS FEBRUARY 19, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

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/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
RFQ NO.: DPW/FHWA21-RFQ-015

SUBMISSION DATE: February 24, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Construction Management Services for Route 33 (Beach Road) Improvements, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE DPW, TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, 2ND FLOOR, OLEAI COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on **February 09, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the DPW Conference Room, 2nd Floor Oleai Commercial Center, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **February 16, 2021** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director** Technical Services Division, 2nd Floor, Oleai Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The new 'buy American' is bad news for Americans

At best, President Joe Biden's new commitment to "Buy American" is largely symbolic and won't change much in practice. At worst, it marks a real intention to raise new import barriers, and poses a threat to international cooperation on trade. In either case, it represents a failure to explain to the country where its interests really lie.

On the face of it, Biden is saying that President Donald Trump was right about trade, but should have gone further. Alongside other policies to restrict imports, Trump beefed up the existing protectionist rules on government procurement; now Biden is tightening them further. His new plan calls for goods bought by the federal government to have more U.S.-made content. In addition, the rules will be more stringently applied. As things stand, suppliers can be granted waivers based on a lack of reasonably priced domestic alternatives and other factors. Biden's order says these exemptions should be harder to obtain.

A lot will depend on how vigorously this system is enforced—but, taken together, the new rules could force the government to buy more expensive and/or lower quality goods. If that happens, it's taxpayers and users of U.S. public services who'll suffer the consequences.

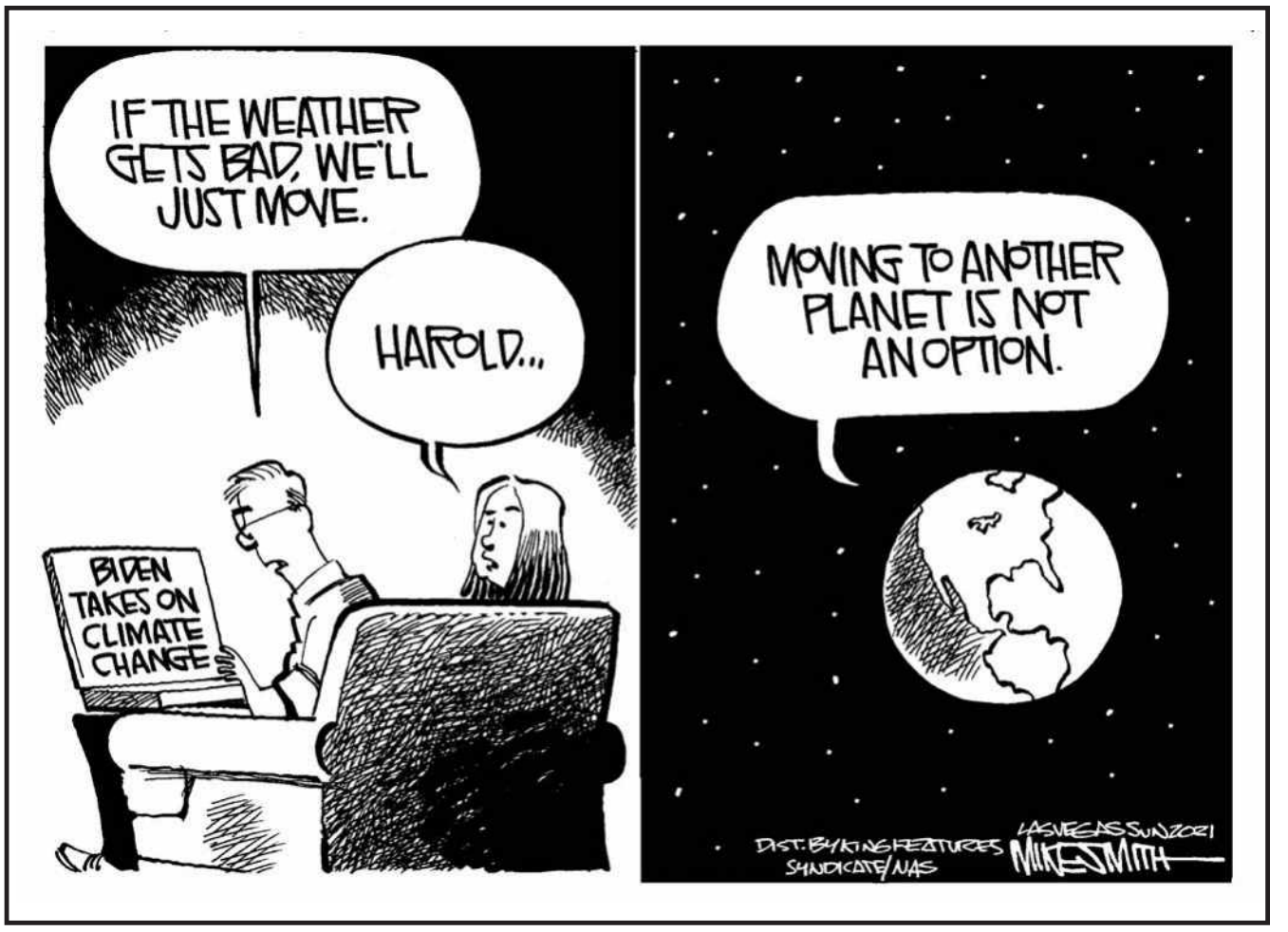
Failing to promote cost-effective government is only the beginning of what's wrong with this approach. Federal procurement has knock-on effects across the economy, because the firms that supply the government have their own supply chains to manage. When the government imposes itself on these systems—especially when it allows itself wide discretion in choosing how and when to act—it causes disruption and uncertainty across a wide front. The damage won't be confined to the suppliers, domestic and foreign, directly contending for government business.

Worst of all, the U.S. wants, or ought to want, other countries to open their own procurement to American suppliers. It played a key role in developing the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Government Procurement, which aims to do the opposite of what Biden has chosen to advocate. The GPA promotes competition in a global procurement market worth some $1.7 trillion—and U.S. firms and their workers have a big stake in that business. Biden's announcement won't encourage other countries to lower their barriers. If other governments decide to follow America's lead and tighten their own procurement rules, U.S. jobs will be lost.

Trump considered formally withdrawing from the GPA, but was apparently talked out of the idea. What Biden intends is unclear. The GPA sets limits on the administration's ability to put protectionist restrictions on big federal contracts. If he honors the spirit of the agreement, the changes he's announced will be somewhat muted; if he intends his policy to make a mark, he'll be led to question not just the GPA but also the country's wider commitment to the WTO and global commerce. That path would compound Trump's mistakes—and could be disastrous for the U.S. and its partners.

This is the bind you get into when you fail to make the case for competition. Protectionist barriers are a proven

See AMERICAN on Next Page


IF THE WEATHER GETS BAD, WE'LL JUST MOVE.
HAROLD...
BIDEN TAKES ON CLIMATE CHANGE
MOVING TO ANOTHER PLANET IS NOT AN OPTION.
DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/UAS
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Trying to get a COVID vaccine is like playing roulette

By MARY SCHMICH
Chicago Tribune

Mary Schmich is a columnist for the Chicago Tribune *and winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for commentary.*

Welcome, everybody, to vaccine roulette!

It's a crazy, new game that requires great endurance, an epic tolerance for failure and, above all, luck.

Maybe you'll be lucky enough to get stuck in a snowstorm near a carload of health care workers who happen to be carrying a few doses of the COVID-19 vaccine that's set to expire and needs to be used ASAP. That's how a few people in Oregon scored their shot the other day.

Or maybe after your vain attempts to sign up for a vaccine at those big pharmacy conglomerates, you'll be the surprise winner of a hospital's vaccine lottery. A couple of Chicago people I know have scored that way.

Or maybe you'll be lucky enough to have a friend who discovers through other friends that a different Chicago hospital is opening vaccine appointments to non-patients. Maybe your friend will share that precious info with you. Maybe, if you hurry, you can call and, after half an hour on hold, get an appointment for a shot in March.

That's how I, as a member of vaccine group 1b, just got my appointment at Rush University Medical Center, after hours of losing the virus roulette game on assorted websites. I made the appointment gratefully, but painfully aware of how many people are still stuck.

Roulette, says the dictionary, is "something involving a high degree of chance and unpredictability." And the only predictable thing about the COVID vaccine rollout at this point is its unpredictability.

To be fair: It's important to acknowledge that getting the vaccine to millions of Americans is a vast, daunting operation. A certain amount of confusion is inevitable. Patience is necessary.

But finding a vaccine appointment is testing the patience of saints. Almost everyone I know has a story by now. Of hours spent on the Walgreens site, the Jewel-Osco site, various government sites. Of phone calls made in vain, of tips followed down rabbit holes.

Try early in the morning, someone says. No, try late at night. No, try on Fridays. No, Mondays work best.

In virus roulette, there are no obvious, fixed rules, and even the tech savvy are stymied.

Some of the saddest stories come from people desperately seeking a vaccine not for themselves but for their parents.

"I've been manically focused on it for the last three weeks," says Cara DiPasquale who lives near Chicago while her parents live in New York state. "First two appointments I nabbed were then canceled by the county, after promised shots did not arrive."

She then made appointments with the state and Walgreens. This week, at last, her parents got their first doses.

"But," she says, "the system is not—and this is a generalization, of course—designed for the senior set it is intended to serve. Not to mention people without access to a computer or Internet."

Deborah Risteen Mercer echoes that complaint. The Chicago hospital where her mother is affiliated, she says, requires patients to get their app to be notified about the vaccine. But her mother, who's 89, doesn't have a smartphone. So she signed up on her mother's behalf.

"It's a ridiculous system," she says, "and I don't know if she could navigate it on her own."

The tortuous systems exist from coast to coast.

"Every health department or grocery store distributor has a totally different system," says my colleague Lara Weber, who has been trying to navigate the mess for her parents in Florida, "and it's hard enough for me to sort out the website guidance, let alone my parents and their friends."

A friend in California reports that his parents—ages 87 and 88—had to drive two hours to get their first vaccine dose.

My colleague Georgia Garvey signed up for text alerts about when and where her dad in Florida could get the vaccine, but so far has received only campaign ads for Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

"Infuriating," she says.

Pamela Halloran, who lives in Chicago's western suburbs, has been trying to get a vaccine for her 87-year-old mother, who has dementia. The futility, she says, reminds her of the time she tried to get tickets to the Dave Matthews Band for her son. And in the face of constant futility, she has decided to calm down.

"Why stress?" she says. "We've come this far."

That's the healthiest way to play virus roulette. Remember how far we've come in this pandemic, how much stress we've endured. The vaccine is getting closer for all of us. With some luck, its distribution will become less of a gamble.

In the meantime, we can keep washing our hands, wearing our masks, keeping our distance and crossing our fingers.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The military coup in Myanmar is an outrage

By CARLA HALL
Los Angeles Times

Carla Hall is a Los Angeles Times *editorial board member.*

Sunday night in the U.S. brought sudden news that there had been a military coup in Myanmar, the South Asian country that for five years has been celebrated as a military dictatorship turned fledgling democracy. Early Monday morning in Myanmar the democratic leaders of the country had been "detained."

Most notably, the military detained Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Prize-winning icon of democracy, who spent 15 years under house arrest for advocating for democracy when a military junta was in place.

Suu Kyi has proved to be dismal and disappointing at advocating for human rights in her own country, but the last thing anyone should want to see is the military unilaterally running this country again.

It was the military and its supporters and paramilitary henchmen who went on a savage campaign of murder, rape and destruction against the Rohingya Muslims, a minority population in the largely Buddhist country and one of the most oppressed groups of people in the world, in 2016 and 2017. About 700,000 were forced to flee to neighboring Bangladesh and its refugee camps. The government faced a formal accusation of genocide at the International Court of Justice at the Hague. Bizarrely, Suu Kyi defended the military, testifying that it was responding to attacks on its outposts by Rohingya rebel groups. The court continues to investigate and the U.S. is considering declaring Myanmar's actions genocide.

Her defenders say Suu Kyi may not have felt she could push the military on human rights without destabilizing this fragile power sharing between civilians and the military. So she didn't push—and yet she still got detained and toppled.

What we had hoped was that Suu Kyi would be emboldened to become a defender of human rights, not the military, as time went on. Her National League of Democracy party again won a landslide victory in November. Unfortunately, that landslide was one of the things that appears to have unsettled the military (at one point, they declared the election a fraud—sound familiar?) and pushed it into declaring it was taking over the country in a "12-month state of emergency."

Matthew Smith, the chief executive of Fortify Rights, a human rights group, wrote in an email to me that he was told that all the civilian members of parliament who were in the capital of Naypyidaw were detained. He saw a list of 26 arrests—and expects more.

All this is tragic. And it's unclear what the U.S. can do. The army general who has taken power, Min Aung Hlaing, is already under economic sanctions by the U.S. for his involvement in human rights abuses.

Nonetheless, world leaders should denounce this and work to put Myanmar back on a democratic course. Monday was to have been the opening day of parliament.

It's time to cancel student debt

By JACOB H. WEISSMAN
Progressive Media Project

Jacob Weissman is a Los Angeles-based musician and former organizer with the Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts. This column was produced for the Progressive Media Project, which is run by The Progressive *magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.*

In light of the looming student debt crisis, the Biden-Harris administration has presented a plan to forgive $10,000 of federal student loan debt for each borrower. That's a far cry from the full cancellation of student debt, as some 55% of Americans would like.

As a former student and graduate of a public university, and a borrower encumbered by tens of thousands of dollars of federal student debt, I have seen firsthand the impetus for these calls.

Supporters of total forgiveness argue that President Joe Biden's plan fails to adequately address nearly 30 million Americans with debts above the proposed threshold, thereby failing to stimulate the economy or address the injustices of the system in place.

But what are these injustices, exactly? For one, while students are expected to pay back the loans they take on, that same expectation does not always apply to large-scale corporations. In the 2008 bank bailout, the federal government spent billions to rescue companies like Bank of America, Morgan Stanley and General Motors from bankruptcy.

Currently, student debt is our second-largest debt category, behind only home mortgages; it accounts for a staggering $1.67 trillion owed across some 45 million borrowers. The government, by the Congressional Budget Office's account, collects annual multibillion-dollar yields off of these debtors: a whopping $135 billion between 2005-2015.

One might reasonably question the moral considerations of a state that enters into such lucrative credit arrangements, especially given that a college degree is required or expected for nearly two-thirds of jobs in this county.

Federal interest rates on student loans sit at 4.5 to 7.5%, higher than the average for a 30-year fixed mortgage (3.8%), a 60-month car loan (4.5%) or the current 10-Year Treasury Lending Rate of 1.1%.

If many students are unable to pay back these loans because of inadequate wages, then interest rates will rise, sending the whole entanglement in a downward spiral. The ever-present stagnation of wages pairs with the exponentially rising costs of college to create a situation where it is risky for a generation to seek the education they need to survive.

The government doesn't bear the brunt of missed payments. Billion-dollar losses means little when you can leverage your college-educated taxpayers, who contribute some $381,000 more in taxes than they receive in benefits over their lifetimes. The state is cushioned by an infrastructure that all but ensures it will get its money's worth.

If the government wanted to help create a sustainable future workforce, it would cap the cost of public higher education, support adequate wages and prosecute those who fashion dangerous financial instruments.

More than 325 organizations have echoed the call for a cancellation of federal student debt in a letter to the new administration, including the NAACP, the Hispanic Federation, the National Women's Law Center and the American Psychological Association. A growing number of politicians—including Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, D-N.Y., Rep. Ayanna Presley, D-Mass., and Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.— have encouraged Biden to unilaterally cancel the debt, a move deemed "lawful and permissible" in an analysis by three legal experts at Harvard University this fall.

It is time for a cancellation of student loans, accompanied by debt-free tuition to public universities. We do not owe the government tribute for seeking the means for survival; we are owed these opportunities.

'Free speech for me, but not for thee'

By RICH LOWRY
King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

Long a stalwart defender of the First Amendment, the American media is now having second thoughts.

For decades, it was a commonplace sentiment among journalists that freedom of the press was one of the glories of our system. It helped to make the government accountable and to air diverse points of view—even unpopular ones—to be tested in the marketplace of ideas.

Media organizations were at the forefront of the fight to vindicate First Amendment rights, with The New York Times involved in two landmark Supreme Court decisions (New York Times Co. v. Sullivan and the Pentagon Papers case) and tended to rise as one against any perceived threat to their prerogatives and freedoms.

This advocacy has been sincere, although, if nothing else, journalists should be First Amendment purists out of a sense of self-interest. In a 2018 essay in The Atlantic representing the bygone conventional wisdom, titled "Why a Free Press Matters," the longtime newscaster Dan Rather noted, "As a working journalist, I know I have a stake in this concept."

One would think so.

Yet, now journalists have lurched from finding a threat to freedom to the press in every criticism of reporters and news outlets by former President Donald Trump to themselves calling for unwelcome media organizations to be shut down.

They've become the thing they profess to hate—closed-minded censors who want to stifle free expression, First Amendment be damned.

Perversely, the TV program and email newsletter of the top media analyst at CNN, Brian Stelter, has been a clearinghouse for such advocacy, whether it is demands to get right-wingers removed from social media or—more astonishingly—to keep conservative cable networks off the airwaves.

Stelter's colleague, media reporter Oliver Darcy, tweeted about his effort to get cable companies to answer why they carry pro-Trump channels like Newsmax and One America News Network. "Do they have any second thoughts about distributing these channels given their election denialism content?" he asked on Twitter. "They won't say."

In the same vein, Washington Post columnist Max Boot drew a direct line between how we deal with foreign terror groups and how we should treat right-wing media organizations. "We need," he wrote, "to shut down the influencers who radicalize people and set them on the path toward violence and sedition."

Boot noted, approvingly, that the U.K. doesn't have the equivalent of Fox News because regulators won't allow it. The U.K. also doesn't have a First Amendment, a small detail that might be worth considering if the point is to protect our freedoms rather than destroy them in a fit of ideological vengeance.

A writer at the progressive publication Mother Jones argued for an advertiser boycott instead of regulatory action in a post called, charmingly, "It's Time to Crush Fox News."

A boycott wouldn't violate the First Amendment like a direct crackdown on Fox and others. Still, it would be private action undertaken in the service of a profoundly illiberal goal, running counter to the country's culture of free speech.

All of this would be bad enough if it weren't people who write and comment on TV for a living advocating it. But journalists have been moving in this direction for a while now, as Armin Rosen catalogues in a disturbing report for Tablet magazine.

The author, Steve Coll, who is no less than the dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University, said last December, "Those of us in journalism have to come to terms with the fact that free speech, a principle that we hold sacred, is being weaponized against the principles of journalism." The former managing editor of Time magazine, Richard Stengel, has written: "All speech is not equal. And where truth cannot drive out lies, we must add new guardrails."

And so its erstwhile champions are ready to retreat from strict adherence to the First Amendment to a new rule of "free speech for me, but not for thee."

AMERICAN

From Page 8

failure when it comes to promoting good jobs and raising living standards. Other policies—especially investing in skills, mobility, innovation and infrastructure—would be vastly more effective. Biden needs to set his face against trade barriers, concentrate on what can work, and tell the country why.

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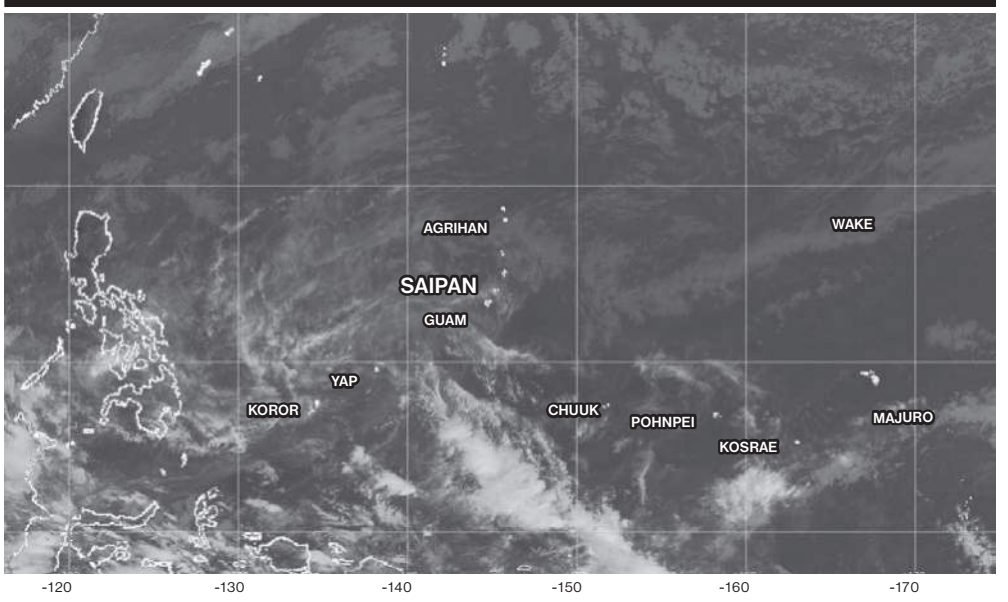
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Breezy. Partly sunny with scattered light showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
86º 76º	86º 76º	87º 77º	87º 77º	87º 77º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:11 AM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows a shear line draped across the Marianas, with most of the cloudiness and scattered showers over Tinian and Saipan, and isolated showers for Guam and Rota. Trade winds are fresh to occasionally strong over Tinian and Saipan coastal waters, and moderate over Guam and Rota. Combined seas are around 10 feet at Tanapag and Ritidian buoys.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Showers	83º / 76º
Palau	Thunderstorm	84º / 77º
Yap	Thunderstorm	84º / 79º
Chuuk	Showers	85º / 80º
Pohnpei	Showers	84º / 78º
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	84º / 80º
Majuro	Thunderstorm	83º / 80º

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:45 AM	6:16 PM
Thursday	6:45 AM	6:16 PM
Friday	6:45 AM	6:16 PM
Saturday	6:44 AM	6:17 PM
Sunday	6:44 AM	6:17 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	10:45 AM	11:25 PM
Thursday	-	11:28 AM	-
Friday	12:23 AM	12:14 PM	-
Saturday	1:22 AM	1:03 PM	-
Sunday	2:23 AM	1:56 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Sunny	75º / 61º
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	45º / 27º
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	72º / 64º
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81º / 64º
London	Showers	48º / 39º
Los Angeles	Cloudy	65º / 52º
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88º / 72º
Melbourne	Sunny	93º / 63º
Miami	Partly Cloudy	78º / 66º
New York	Partly Cloudy	35º / 22º
Osaka	Sunny	54º / 39º
Paris	Showers	50º / 43º
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	48º / 30º
Rome	Partly Cloudy	61º / 50º
Salem	Partly Cloudy	69º / 47º
San Francisco	Cloudy	42º / 22º
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	43º / 23º
Tokyo	Sunny	55º / 36º
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	44º / 29º

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
5:26 AM	Low Tide	0.13
11:55 AM	High Tide	1.80
6:34 PM	Low Tide	0.44
-	-	-

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:40am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

WHITE LAUNDRY:

Place where you can do *laundry* and more

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

White Laundry, located along Chalan Kanoa Drive near the U.S. Postal Service, is a place where people can do laundry and other things that they need to tend to. The place turns into a haven for people that want to find time to be able to do work, read, study, and catch up with friends while they get their clothes clean, dry, and ready for use.

According to White Laundry manager Sean Lee, aside from being one of the most inexpensive laundromats on island—top load is 75 cents, Dexter machine small is only $1, and the bigger ones is $2 per load, they also have a large space during this era of COVID-19. "Our customers enjoy the spacious hallways and areas at White Laundry…we have tables and benches where people can sit down to enjoy snacks, read, or work…the space also helps customers to maintain social distancing… other laundromats can be tight where the tendency is to bump with other people when you try to load, take out, or fold laundry," he said.

BEA CABRERA
White Laundry located in Chalan Kanoa opened in 2019 with the goal of being one of the cheapest and cleanest laundromats on Saipan.

"We used to have a waiting room with AC, television, and a bench but we closed it last year due to COVID-19 concerns… We also have full-size carts that they can use to carry their laundry baskets from the car then to the machine or from one machine to another machine… we offer Wi-Fi and it is accessible because we freely give the password to customers… CCTV cameras are in place so customers feel secured… White Laundry is a place where you can do laundry and many more," he added.

White Laundry has 100 washing and drying machines that can accommodate many customers from morning to evening.
BEA CABRERA

For more information, call (670) 234-9368.

Upon entry, the "feel of clean" will hit you right away with the white walls, polished floors, and organized rows of washers and dryers. "When we opened in November 2019, my boss was considering to call the shop different names but he wanted to keep the idea of being the cleanest laundromat on island. The name White Laundry came about because white is usually associated with things that are clean," Lee said.

"Our everyday goal is to maintain the cleanest environment and we take pride in that... Our boss is keen in keeping not only visible areas clean but also the our restrooms—one for men and two for women…we make it a point that the restrooms are clean because it's a good indication that other areas in the laundromat are the same," Lee added.

To date, White Laundry has a total of 100 washing and drying machines. They also accept drop-offs. "The laundromat is still in the process of picking up business. It has been over a year since we opened and we are working hard to get more customers, maintain the ones that frequent White Laundry and not lose any existing customers… We started as a high-end laundromat but when COVID-19 hit many were losing their jobs, furloughed. etc. so we lowered down prices to help the community," Lee said.

"When customers come to White Laundry, they tell us how amazed they are on how big the place is and how doing laundry here is budget-friendly. Those are comments that we want to hear and keep. We do not plan to have any price change in the future. We would like to maintain the quality of our services as much as possible," Lee added.

White Laundry is open Monday-Sunday from 6am to 9pm. For more information, call (670) 234-9368.

White Laundry is spacious so people can move more easily.
BEA CABRERA

Biden meets Republicans on virus aid, but no quick deal

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden told Republican senators during a two-hour meeting Monday night he's unwilling to settle on an insufficient coronavirus aid package after they pitched their slimmed down $618 billion proposal that's a fraction of the $1.9 trillion he is seeking.

No compromise was reached in the lengthy session, Biden's first with lawmakers at the White House, and Democrats in Congress pushed ahead with groundwork for approving his COVID relief plan with or without Republican votes. Despite the Republican group's appeal for bipartisanship, as part of Biden's efforts to unify the country, the president made it clear he won't delay aid in hopes of winning GOP support.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said that while there were areas of agreement, "the president also reiterated his view that Congress must respond boldly and urgently, and noted many areas which the Republican senators' proposal does not address."

She said, "He will not slow down work on this urgent crisis response, and will not settle for a package that fails to meet the moment."

The two sides are far apart, with the Republican group of 10 senators focused primarily on the health care crisis and smaller $1,000 direct aid to Americans, and Biden leading Democrats toward a more sweeping rescue package, three times the size, to shore up households, local governments and a partly shuttered economy.

On a fast track, the goal is to have COVID relief approved by March, when extra unemployment assistance and other pandemic aid expires, testing the ability of the new administration and Congress to deliver, with political risks for all sides from failure.

Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine called the meeting a "frank and very useful" conversation, noting that the president also filled in some details on his proposal.

"All of us are concerned about struggling families, teetering small businesses and an overwhelmed health care system," said Collins, flanked by other senators outside the White House.

Republicans are tapping into bipartisan urgency to improve the nation's vaccine distribution and vastly expand virus testing with $160 billion in aid. That is similar to what Biden has proposed. But from there, the two plans drastically diverge.

The GOP's $1,000 direct payments would go to fewer households than the $1,400 Biden has proposed, and the Republicans offer only a fraction of what he wants to reopen schools.

They also would give nothing to states, money that Democrats argue is just as important, with $350 billion in Biden's plan to keep police, fire and other workers on the job.

Google antes up $2.6M to settle pay, job discrimination case

SAN RAMON, Calif. (AP)—Google will pay $2.6 million to more than 5,500 employees and past job applicants to resolve allegations that the internet giant discriminated against female engineers and Asians in California and Washington state.

The settlement announced Monday closes a 4-year-old case that the Labor Department brought as part its periodic reviews of the pay practices at federal government contractors such as Google.

That inquiry resulted in accusations that during a period spanning from 2014 to 2017, Google paid female engineers less than men in similar positions. The pay discrepancies were cited in several Google offices in its home state of California, as well as at locations in Seattle and Kirkland, Washington.

Google had fiercely contested the allegations as unfounded before reaching the settlement without acknowledging any wrongdoing.

"We believe everyone should be paid based upon the work they do, not who they are, and invest heavily to make our hiring and compensation processes fair and unbiased," Google said Monday. The Mountain View, California, company also said it has conducted internal audits during the past years to address any inequities in the pay of its male and female employees.

Nevertheless, the settlement will require Google to pay $1.35 million to more than 2,500 of its female engineers to compensate them for past discrimination alleged by the Labor Department. Another $1.23 million is earmarked for more than 1,700 women and Asians who unsuccessfully applied for engineering jobs at Google.

The settlement also requires Google to contribute $250,000 annually for five years to create a reserve to cover any necessary adjustments still needed in the future.

"Regardless of how complex or the size of the workforce, we remain committed to enforcing equal opportunity laws to ensure non-discrimination and equity in the workforce," said Jane Suhr, who oversees the Labor Department's federal contract compliance programs in San Francisco.

Nation

Winter storm moves north, dumping snow along its way

AP
Parked taxis are covered with snow during a snowstorm, Monday, Feb. 1, 2021, in Brooklyn, New York.

Parts of northern New England were waiting their turn to be pummeled by a heavy winter storm Tuesday, while residents of the New York City region were digging out from under piles of snow that shut down public transport, canceled flights and closed coronavirus vaccination sites.

The National Weather Service said a foot (31 centimeters) or more could be on the ground in New England by the time the snow finally tapers off in the northernmost states by Wednesday evening.

The storm already disrupted the second phase of Massachusetts' vaccine rollout as a Boston site that was supposed to open Monday for residents ages 75 and older did not; some other mass vaccination sites remained open. The state was expected to get 12 to 18 inches (31 to 61 centimeters) of heavy, wet snow and wind up to 55 mph (88 kph) along the coast, according to Gov. Charlie Baker.

In Connecticut, Gov. Ned Lamont said the storm forced the postponement of about 10,000 shots and delayed the state's weekly resupply of vaccine, now expected Tuesday. He urged providers that called off vaccination appointments to extend their hours if needed to reschedule the shots by the end of the week.

Along with vaccination delays, the lumbering storm caused other problems all along the eastern United States on Monday.

More than 13 inches (33 centimeters) of snow dropped on Manhattan's Central Park, and as much as 16 inches (41 centimeters) was reported in northern New Jersey.

In Virginia, four firefighters were taken to hospitals with injuries that were not life threatening after their fire-truck overturned Sunday on snow-covered roads in Henrico County, The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported.

In Pennsylvania, authorities said a 67-year-old woman with Alzheimer's disease who reportedly wandered away from her home was found dead of hypothermia on an Allentown street Monday morning. About 60 miles (97 kilometers) north in Plains Township, a shooting after an argument over snow removal killed a married couple, and the suspect was later found dead at his nearby home of a wound believed to have been self-inflicted, officials in Luzerne County said.

A preliminary investigation indicates the people involved had a long-running conflict, but "this morning, the dispute was exacerbated by a disagreement over snow disposal," District Attorney Stefanie Salavantis said. ***(AP)***

Trump lawyer: Impeachment case 'undemocratic,' ill-advised

WASHINGTON (AP)— Democrats are using the upcoming Senate impeachment trial of Donald Trump as a political "weapon" to bar the former president from seeking office again and are pursuing a case that is "undemocratic" and unconstitutional, one of his lawyers said Monday night.

Trump faces trial next week on accusations that he incited a harrowing and deadly siege at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, when a mob of loyalists in town for a rally supporting the president overran the police and stormed the building. The House passed a single article of impeachment against Trump one week before he left office, A trial would allow Democrats to present evidence against Trump and hold him publicly accountable for the attack.

However, whether a Senate trial is constitutional is a point of contention because Trump is no longer in office and, if convicted, cannot be removed from an office he doesn't occupy. Democrats point to an 1876 impeachment of a secretary of war who had already resigned and to opinions by many legal scholars. The Senate could vote to bar Trump from holding federal office if he were convicted, which is a goal Democrats support.

On the eve of expected legal briefs from lawyers for both sides, Trump attorney David Schoen's appearance on Fox News forecast some of the arguments he plans to make at the trial, calling the case needlessly divisive as well as unconstitutional and undemocratic.

"It's also the most ill-advised legislative action that I've seen in my lifetime," Schoen said.

Trump is the first president in American history to be impeached twice. He was acquitted at a Senate trial last year over his contacts with his Ukrainian counterpart. Impeachment, Schoen said, "is the weapon they've tried to use against him."

The new case was an effort to bar Trump from ever running for office again, Schoen said, "and that's about as undemocratic as you can get."

Schoen, a criminal defense and civil rights lawyer, and Bruce Castor, a former county prosecutor in Pennsylvania, were announced as Trump's legal team on Sunday evening, one day after it was revealed that the former president had parted ways with another set of attorneys in what one person described as a mutual decision.

In an interview with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Schoen said he did not plan to argue that Trump lost the election because of fraud, as Trump has repeatedly insisted, and would instead argue that the trial itself is unconstitutional since Trump has already left office and that his words were protected by the First Amendment and did not incite a riot.

House Democrats plan to lay out what happened on Jan. 6 in graphic detail — an effort to get through to Senate Republicans who have largely avoided talking about the attack itself and Trump's role in it, instead focusing on the process of the impeachment trial. They are expected to play videos and verbally recount the violence of the day in hopes of stirring the Republicans, most of whom fled the Senate that day as the rioters broke in.

The nine House impeachment managers who will argue the case also are expected to lay out how they believe Trump's actions over the previous several months led up to it and eventually incited the insurrectionists to act.

Their arguments will include a look at Trump's "prolonged effort" to persuade his supporters to believe his false claims that the election was stolen — and describe how his pleas for them to come to Washington and his words immediately before the attack directly caused it.

Hate groups migrate online, making tracking more difficult

During one of the most politically divisive years in recent memory, the number of active hate groups in the U.S. actually declined as far-right extremists migrated further to online networks, a move that has made it harder to track adherents of white nationalist and neo-Nazi ideologies.

In its annual report, released Monday, the Southern Poverty Law Center said it identified 838 active hate groups operating across the U.S. in 2020. That's a decrease from the 940 documented in 2019 and the record-high of 1,020 in 2018, said the law center, which tracks racism, xenophobia and anti-government militias.

"It is important to understand that the number of hate groups is merely one metric for measuring the level of hate and racism in America, and that the decline in groups should not be interpreted as a reduction in bigoted beliefs and actions motivated by hate," said the report, first shared exclusively with The Associated Press.

The Montgomery, Alabama-based law center said many hate groups have moved to social media platforms and use of encrypted apps, while others have been banned altogether from mainstream social media networks.

Still, the law center said, online platforms allow individuals to interact with hate and anti-government groups without becoming members, maintain connections with likeminded people, and take part in real-world actions, such as last month's siege on the U.S. Capitol.

White nationalist organizations, a subset of the hate groups listed in the report, declined last year from 155 to 128. Those groups had seen huge growth the previous two years after being energized by Donald Trump's campaign and presidency, the report said.

The number of anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and anti-LGBTQ hate groups remained largely stable, while their in-person organizing was hampered by the coronavirus pandemic.

Bottom line, the levels of hate and bigotry in America have not diminished, said SPLC President and CEO Margaret Huang.

"What's important is that we start to reckon with all the reasons why those groups have persisted for so long and been able to get so much influence in the last White House, that they actually feel emboldened," Huang told the AP.

Last month, as President Joe Biden's administration began settling in, the Department of Homeland Security issued an early national terrorism bulletin in response to a growing threat from home-grown extremists, including anti-government militias and white supremacists. The extremists are coalescing under a broader, more loosely affiliated movement of people who reject democratic institutions and multiculturalism, Huang said.

The SPLC's report comes out nearly a month after a mostly white mob of Trump supporters and members of far-right groups violently breached the U.S. Capitol building. At least five deaths have been linked to the assault, including a Capitol police officer. Some in the mob waved Confederate battle flags and wore clothing with neo-Nazi symbolism.

Federal authorities have made more than 160 arrests and sought hundreds more for criminal charges related to the deadly Jan. 6 assault. Authorities have also linked roughly 30 defendants to a group or movement, according to an AP review of court records. ***(AP)***

World

Myanmar lawmakers: Army guarding housing after coup

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Hundreds of members of Myanmar's Parliament remained confined inside their government housing in the country's capital on Tuesday, a day after the military staged a coup and detained senior politicians including Nobel laureate and de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

One of the lawmakers said he and 400-some parliament members were able to speak with one another inside the compound and communicate with their constituencies by phone, but were not allowed to leave the housing complex in Naypyitaw. He said police were inside the complex and soldiers were outside it.

The lawmaker said the politicians, comprised of members of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party and various smaller parties, spent a sleepless night worried that they might be taken away but were otherwise OK.

"We had to stay awake and be alert," said the lawmaker, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of concern for his safety.

The takeover came the morning lawmakers from all of the country had gathered in the capital for the opening of the new parliamentary session and follows days of worry that a coup was coming. The military said the seizure was necessary because the government had not acted on the military's claims of fraud in November's elections — in which Suu Kyi's ruling party won a majority of the parliamentary seats up for grabs — and because it allowed the election to go ahead despite the coronavirus pandemic.

An announcement read on military-owned Myawaddy TV on Monday said Commander-in-Chief Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing would be in charge of the country for one year. Late Monday, the office of the commander-in-chief announced the names of new Cabinet ministers. The 11-member Cabinet is composed of military generals, former military generals and former advisers to a previous government headed by former general Thein Sein.

The coup is a dramatic backslide for Myanmar, which was emerging from decades of strict military rule and international isolation that began in 1962. It now presents a test for the international community, which had ostracized Myanmar while it was under military rule and then enthusiastically embraced Suu Kyi's government as a sign the country was finally on the path to democracy. U.S. President Joe Biden threatened new sanctions, which the country had previously faced.

On Tuesday in Yangon, the country's biggest city, the streets were quieter than usual but taxis and buses were still running and there were no outward signs of heavy security.

AP

Myanmar's military stand guard at a checkpoint manned with an armored vehicles blocking a road leading to the parliament building Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2021, in Naypyitaw, Myanmar.

Bolsonaro win in Congress seen hindering impeachment drive

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP)—Lawmakers supported by Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro were elected to head both houses of Congress on Monday, in a major victory for the conservative leader's effort to fend off a potential impeachment effort.

In the most crucial decision, Bolsonaro-backed candidate Arthur Lira of the center-right Progressive party was chosen as speaker in the Chamber of Deputies with 302 votes against 145 for his main adversary, Luiz Felipe Baleia Rossi of the also center-right Movement for Brazilian Democracy party.

Any impeachment move would have to start in the lower house.

Hours earlier, senators elected Rodrigo Pacheco of the center-right Democrats party as the Senate president, giving him 57 out of 78 votes to beat Simone Tebet, also of the Movement for Brazilian Democracy.

Neither Lira nor Pacheco mentioned Bolsonaro in their victory speeches. Both promised to lead an independent legislative.

Opponents of the president, who is midway through a four-year term, have been staging street demonstrations to demand his ouster over his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit Brazil hard.

Beatriz Rey, a political scientist at the Center for Latin American & Latino Studies at American University in Washington, said the two wins would reduce Bolsonaro's risk of being impeached, but not erase it.

"Bolsonaro has won, but it is not clear whether he will get unconditional support," Rey said. "He has no coalition in Congress and that is why he is so active in this election. But he can still lose control if he has an issue with spending, if his cabinet reshuffle doesn't work. The president needs the support of these center-right parties."

India pandemic-fighting budget to boost health care spending

NEW DELHI (AP)—India's government has proposed to increase spending on health care in a $477 billion budget for 2021-22 that promises extra help for weathering the coronavirus pandemic.

India is in its worst economic slowdown in a decade. The budget proposal presented to parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday also focuses on developing financial institutions and shoring up of infrastructure to get the pandemic-ravaged nation back on track as the world's fastest-growing major economy.

"India is well well-poised to be the land of promise and hope," she said in explaining the budget for the fiscal year that begins April 1.

Contrary to expectations, the proposed budget did not promise extra support for the country's farmers who have been protesting for more than two months against new agricultural laws which they say will favor large agribusiness and corporations.

Those protests have posed the biggest political challenge for Modi since he took office in 2014, in part because farmers are the most influential voting bloc in the country.

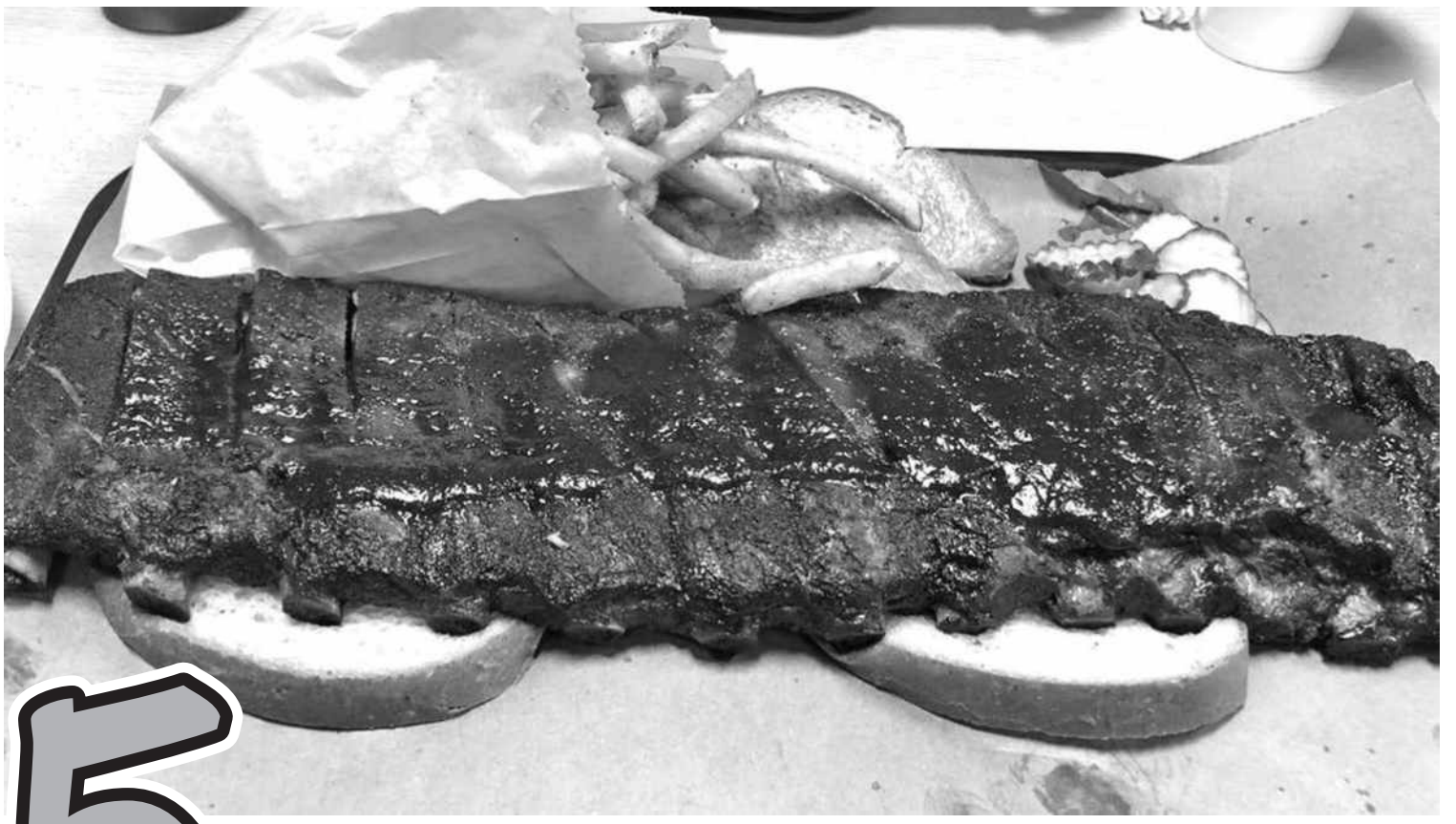
Sitharaman said the government plans to spend $30.20 billion on health care over the next six years to improve an underfunded health system that has creaked under the additional burden of the pandemic, which has killed more than 154,000 Indians so far.

India currently spends about 1% of its gross domestic product on health, the lowest among major economies.

Sitharaman also announced $4.81 billion to be earmarked for making more COVID-19 vaccines.

In Loving Memory of
Maria Babauta Biadang
Lovingly known as "Liang"
Born to life on October 27, 1951
Called to eternal life on January 27, 2021
In her new life, she now joins her:
Mother: †Susana Quitugua Babauta
Father: †Sabino Palacios Babauta
Husband: †Cortez B. Biadang
Siblings: †Jose Q. Babauta
†Jesus Q. Babauta
Her spirit and memories will forever live in the hearts of her:
Son: Marco B. Biadang
Grandson: Mark Alexander Aquino
Sisters: Isabel Q. Babauta & Children
Anna B. Mangohig & Children
and numerous nieces and nephews
Funeral services will be held on Friday, February 5, 2021 at Borja Funeral Home, Chalan Kanoa. Viewing will commence at 9:00 a.m. Prayer/liturgy will be held at 10:00 a.m.
Thank you and Si Yu'us Ma'ase.
Marco & Family

Good Housekeeping



A rack of ribs from Joe's Kansas City Bar-B-Que.

TAMPA BAY TIMES

5 foods to make for a Tampa Bay vs. Kansas City Super Bowl

By SHARON KENNEDY WYNNE
TAMPA BAY TIMES

Some fans consider it good luck ahead of any game you care about to eat the most popular foods from your opponent's city. So when the Tampa Bay Buccaneers play the New Orleans Saints, we make gumbo. For Super Bowl 55, which pits the Bucs against the Chiefs right here in Tampa on Feb. 7, it seems like a good time to try some Kansas City barbecue.

Marc Topkin, the Tampa Bay Times' award-winning baseball writer , put a rack of ribs from Joe's Kansas City Bar-B-Que as No. 5 on his list of 60 things that will make this MLB season different, which he wrote last year because he wouldn't be traveling with the team.

"They also sell sauce by the jug," Topkin said gleefully.

You can buy the stuff yourself at joeskc.com. They'll even mail you a rack of ribs. Their barbecue sauce is known for its sweet tomato base with a little kick of heat at the end from chili powder or red pepper flakes.

Another option for your Super Bowl spread is to pay tribute to Tampa, the true home of the pressed Cuban sandwich. Keep in mind the recipe here from Tampa's famous Columbia Restaurant just says "smoked ham," which is actually a fully cooked ham glazed with both granulated and brown sugar. Not to mention the pork shoulder in this recipe is marinated overnight with orange juice and garlic and roasted for hours. Only then can you make the sandwich. See columbiarestaurant.com for the full recipes.

A Cuban sandwich platter is pictured at the Cuban Sandwich Festival in Tampa in November.

TAMPA BAY TIMES

And since we are in an unusual year, where a crowded house party is frowned upon, we also have some ideas for dips and other snacks, such as Dirty Shrimp, which don't involve a shared serving spoon.

Kansas City ribs

The ribs recipe is a copycat we found on thespruceeats.com because the Barbecue Hall of Fame inductee and pit master Jeff Stehney of Joe's in Kansas City certainly isn't giving up his recipe.

Food & Wine writer Paul Kirk offers his best version of his hometown's classic barbecue sauce.

Give the ribs a rub and the smoke treatment on the grill, though you can also make them in the oven. An instant-read thermometer is a handy tool to tell you when they are done.

2 1/2 pounds of spare ribs

For the rub:

2 tablespoons white cane sugar
1 tablespoon light brown sugar
2 tablespoons Hungarian paprika
2 tablespoons seasoned salt
1 1/2 teaspoons chili powder
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon granulated onion
1 teaspoon white pepper
1 teaspoon finely ground black pepper

For the sauce:

3 cups ketchup
2/3 cup dark brown sugar
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup white wine vinegar
1/2 cup tomato paste
2 tablespoons yellow mustard
2 tablespoons chili powder
1 tablespoon pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon onion powder
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

To make the sauce: In a medium saucepan, combine all of the ingredients and bring to a boil over moderate heat. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring often to prevent scorching.

To make the rub: Combine the sugars, paprika, seasoned salt, chili powder, cumin, onion, white pepper and black pepper and blend well.

To make the ribs: Remove the membrane from the back of the slab of ribs and trim any excess fat. Season the slabs all over with the rub. Cover and let rest in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or overnight.

Cook the ribs using the indirect method at 275 degrees. "Indirect" means not directly over flames or coals. Push the hot coals to one side or turn off the gas on one side of the grill. Put the meat on the "off" side and close the lid.

Cook the ribs for 5 to 6 hours, turning them every hour or two. The ribs are done when you can easily pull them apart or they bend significantly in the middle when picked up. But checking them with a thermometer is best. Look for 203 degrees for internal temperature.

Apply barbecue sauce during the last 15 to 30 minutes. If grilling or smoking, you can move the ribs over to the hot side to "set" the sauce.

Don't have a grill? Cook covered in a 325-degree oven until tender, around 2 or 3 hours.

Columbia Restaurant's Cuban Sandwich

9-inch piece of Cuban bread
4 ounces smoked ham, thinly sliced
1 1/2 ounces pork loin, thinly sliced
1 ounce Genoa salami (peppercorn studded preferred), thinly sliced
1 ounce Swiss cheese, thinly sliced
2 pickle chips
1 tablespoon yellow mustard
Soft butter

Cut Cuban bread in half lengthwise. Layer sliced meats and cheese in the following order: ham, pork, salami and then cheese. Place pickle chips evenly on top. Spread mustard on top half of bread. Lightly butter both top and bottom of sandwich. Heat sandwich in a press until crisp. Cut diagonally from corner to corner.

Serves 1.

Source: *columbiarestaurant.com*

Beer dip

1 package Hidden Valley Ranch mix

The famous Cuban sandwich that's on the menu at the Columbia Restaurant located on E Seventh Avenue in Ybor City.

TAMPA BAY TIMES

16 ounces softened cream cheese
6 ounces beer
6 ounces shredded cheddar cheese

Combine and chill all the ingredients. Serve with pretzels or chips to scoop.

Onion dip

1 cup sour cream
1 cup mayonnaise
4 ounces softened cream cheese
2 tablespoons dried onion flakes
2 minced garlic cloves
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons sliced green onions

Combine and chill all the ingredients at least 2 hours. Garnish with sliced green onions. Serve with crackers, pita chips or vegetables to dip.

Dirty Shrimp

1/2 cup butter (1 stick)
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper (or more to taste)
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 teaspoon thyme
1 teaspoon basil
1 teaspoon oregano
2 teaspoons garlic, minced
2 pounds shrimp, cleaned and deveined

Melt butter in medium-hot pan and add seasonings and garlic, cooking for 1 minute. Add shrimp and cook until firm and pink, about 4 minutes. Can be served immediately or at room temperature as an appetizer.

Source*: Sharon Kennedy Wynne*

Super Bowl 55

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Kansas City Chiefs face off Feb. 7 at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa. Kickoff time is 6:30 p.m. The game is on CBS.

Life & Style

Marilyn Manson denies Evan Rachel Wood's abuse allegations

By ANDREW DALTON
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Rocker Marilyn Manson was dropped by his record label on Monday after actor Evan Rachel Wood accused her ex-fiancé of sexual and other physical abuse, alleging she was "manipulated into submission" during their relationship.

Manson called the allegations "horrible distortions of reality."

Wood, who stars on HBO's "Westworld," had spoken frequently in recent years about being abused in a relationship but did not name the person until she posted Monday on Instagram.

"The name of my abuser is Brian Warner, also known to the world as Marilyn Manson," Wood said. "He started grooming me when I was a teenager and horrifically abused me for years."

Manson's label, Loma Vista Recordings, said in a statement that after the "disturbing allegations," it will "cease to further promote his current album" and has "also decided not to work with Marilyn Manson on any future projects."

Wood and Manson's relationship became public in 2007 when he was 38 and she was 19, and they were briefly engaged in 2010 before breaking up.

Wood, now 33, said in her post that Manson left her "brainwashed and manipulated into submission."

"I am done living in fear of retaliation, slander, or blackmail. I am here to expose this dangerous man and call out the many industries that have enabled him, before he ruins any more lives," the post added.

Manson

Wood

She concluded, "I stand with the many victims who will no longer be silent."

Manson responded with his own Instagram post Monday night.

"Obviously my art and life have long been magnets for controversy, but these recent claims about me are horrible distortions of reality," his post said. "My intimate relationships have always been entirely consensual with like-minded partners. Regardless of how—and why—others are now choosing to misrepresent the past, that is the truth."

It was not immediately clear whether Wood has gone to authorities with any of her allegations, and a representative did not immediately respond when asked via email whether she had.

In 2018, Los Angeles County prosecutors declined to file charges against Manson over allegations of assault, battery and sexual assault dating to 2011, saying they were limited by statutes of limitations and a lack of corroboration. The accuser in that case was identified only as a social acquaintance of Manson.

He denied the allegations through his attorney at the time.

In 2017, Wood was one of thousands of women who identified themselves as victims of sexual harassment or assault amid the #MeToo movement.

"Being raped once made it easier to be raped again. I instinctually shut down. My body remembered, so it protected me. I disappeared. #metoo," Wood wrote at the time as part of a series of tweets on her experience.

In 2018, she testified about her abuse to a House Judiciary subcommittee as she sought to have a Sexual Assault Survivors' Bill of Rights passed in all 50 states.

"My experience with domestic violence was this: Toxic mental, physical and sexual abuse which started slow but escalated over time," she told the committee.

Wood began acting as a child, gaining fame and a Golden Globe nomination for playing a troubled adolescent in 2003's "Thirteen."

For three seasons she has played Dolores Abernathy, a sentient android, on HBO's "Westworld" and has been nominated for a Golden Globe and an Emmy Award for the role.

Manson, 52, became a household name in the mid-1990s with a series of hit rock albums and used a stage persona designed to shock and stoke controversy.

The Associated Press does not normally name people who say they were victims of sexual assault but is naming Wood because of her decision to speak out publicly.

Music helping Tony Bennett battle Alzheimer's disease

NEW YORK (AP)—Tony Bennett has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease but it hasn't quieted his legendary voice.

The singer's wife and son reveal in the latest edition of AARP The Magazine that Bennett was first diagnosed with the irreversible neurological disorder in 2016. The magazine says he endures "increasingly rarer moments of clarity and awareness."

Still, he continues to rehearse and twice a week goes through his 90-minute set with his longtime pianist, Lee Musiker. The magazine says he sings with perfect pitch and apparent ease.

A beloved interpreter of American standards, Bennett's chart-topping career spans seven decades. "He's not the old Tony anymore," his wife, Susan, told the magazine. "But when he sings, he's the old Tony."

Bennett, 94, gained his first pop success in the early 1950s and enjoyed a career revival in the 1990s and became popular with younger audiences in part because of an appearance on "MTV Unplugged." He continued recording and touring constantly, and his 2014 collaboration with Lady Gaga, "Tony Bennett & Lady Gaga: Cheek to Cheek," debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard charts.

'Saved by the Bell' star Dustin Diamond dies of cancer at 44

"Saved by the Bell" star Dustin Diamond died Monday after a three-week fight with cancer, according to his representative. He was 44.

"Dustin did not suffer. He did not have to lie submerged in pain. For that, we are grateful," the actor's spokesman, Roger Paul, said in a statement.

Diamond, best known for playing the quirky, nerdy Screech on the hit '90s sitcom, was hospitalized last month in Florida and his team disclosed later that he had cancer. Diamond had carcinoma.

Former co-star Mario Lopez took to Twitter to say farewell: "Dustin, you will be missed, my man. The fragility of this life is something never to be taken for granted." Another co-star, Mark-Paul Gosselaar, called Diamond "a true comedic genius," adding "I will miss those raw, brilliant sparks that only he was able to produce."

"Saved by the Bell" aired from 1989 to 1993, and its related shows included "Saved by the Bell: The College Years," "Good Morning, Miss Bliss" and "Saved by the Bell: The New Class," which Diamond starred in. A sequel was launched on Peacock last fall featuring many from the original cast, including Gosselaar, Lopez, Elizabeth Berkley and Tiffani Thiessen. Diamond was not included.

"God speed, Dustin," Thiessen wrote on Instagram. Josh Gad on Twitter said Diamond was "a defining part of our collective pop cultural touchstones."

Diamond

He starred in a handful of reality television series including the 5th season of "Celebrity Fit Club," "The Weakest Link" and "Celebrity Boxing 2." In December 2013, Diamond appeared on an episode of OWN's "Where Are They Now?" and became a house member in the 12th season of "Celebrity Big Brother."

Diamond was sued several times for delinquent taxes and in foreclosure proceedings for missing mortgage payments. He has appeared on reality TV shows, made a sex tape and produced a tell-all documentary on Lifetime TV called "The Unauthorized Saved by the Bell Story." In 2015, he was sentenced to serve four months in jail for his part in a Wisconsin barroom stabbing.

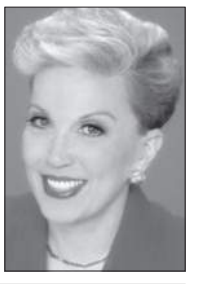
"Dustin was a humorous and high-spirited individual whose greatest passion was to make others laugh. He was able to sense and feel other peoples' emotions to such a length that he was able to feel them too—a strength and a flaw, all in one," wrote Paul. ***(AP)***

New mom not in the mood for husband's entreaties

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR ABBY: I am a first-time mommy of a beautiful 2 1/2-month-old little boy. I should also mention that I'm 40 years old. My husband is constantly asking for sex. I mean, every day. I honestly do not feel like having it. I'm so worn out by the day-to-day chores of being a wife and motherhood that when the baby goes to sleep, I go to sleep immediately.

My husband refuses to understand how exhausted I am, and his constantly asking for sex makes me want it even less. I try to reassure him that it's not him, because he thinks he has done something wrong or that I'm not attracted to him anymore. But he also doesn't help me out much around here. So, basically, I'm asking what can I do?

TOUCHY SUBJECT IN WEST VIRGINIA

DEAR TOUCHY: You and your husband are overdue for a frank talk. Sit him down and explain EXACTLY what you need from him. Tell him you need his help so the entire burden of taking care of his home and his baby isn't entirely on your shoulders. After you have finished doing that, point out that if he contributes to the household tasks and baby duties, it will take the pressure off you and make it more likely that you can relax and get in the mood for something more pleasant.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My son is in an abusive marriage. He is verbally, mentally and emotionally abused by his wife constantly. She does everything she can to force him to leave. She tells him it is her house and she wants him to go. They bought the house together, and they both work and pay the bills. He won't leave because he doesn't want to leave his kids. Is there any kind of support for abused men?

CONCERNED DAD IN N. CAROLINA

DEAR DAD: There certainly is, and I hope you will tell your son to reach out for it. No one should be harassed the way your son is being, because the effects can be not only devastating, but also long-lasting. The National Domestic Violence Hotline (thehotline.org; 1-800-799-7233) and Stop Abuse for Everyone (stopabuseforeveryone.org) serve male victims of abuse as well as female. Urge him to contact one or both of them.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have married into a family that celebrates birthdays of members who have died. They are not observing the passing, but doing full-fledged birthday events. This is a practice I have never before experienced, and most of these people I have never met. I don't want to be disrespectful, but it seems really odd, especially since many of those people died years ago. It's becoming difficult to do more than express my sympathy for their loss. Is this done by other families?

BEWILDERED IN FLORIDA

DEAR BEWILDERED: If there is anything I have learned in the course of writing this column, as well as my own journey through life, it is that individuals, families and cultures do not have identical ways of grieving or honoring their deceased loved ones. While it may seem unusual to you, this is the way they remember their loved ones.

Because this is your spouse's family, talk with him about how to navigate this issue without causing hurt feelings. If you are uncomfortable participating in these celebrations, continue to be respectful, but attend fewer of them.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

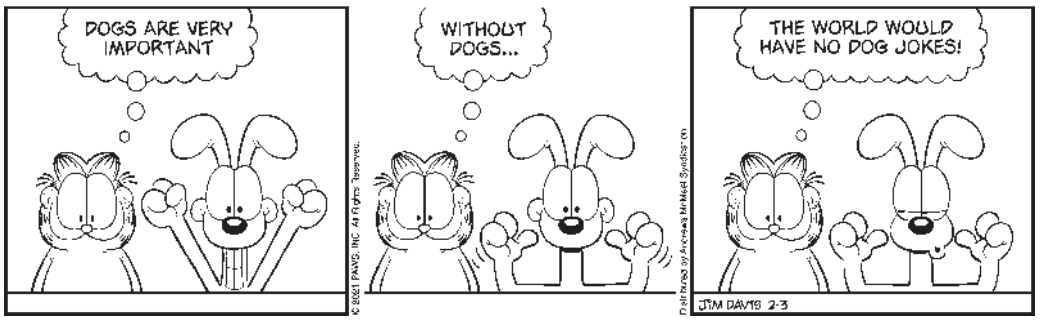
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

AUGHHH! A SNOW SNAKE'S GOT ME!
HORRIBLE INNER TEETH ON ITS SEPARATELY MOVING UPPER JAW BONES ARE PULLING ME DOWN ITS FRIGID GULLET! RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!
AT LEAST I HAVE A LIFE...UNLIKE SOME WEIRDOS I KNOW.
I SUPPOSE IF I HAD TWO X CHROMOSOMES, I'D FEEL HOSTILE TOO.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

AT THIS POINT THE COFFEE GOES THROUGH MY SECRET PROCESS.
SSS
WHAT'S THE SECRET PROCESS?
I CAN'T TELL YOU, SO IF YOU'RE CAPTURED BY SPIES, YOU CAN HONESTLY TELL THEM YOU DON'T KNOW IT.
WAIT. COFFEE SPIES?
I'VE SAID TOO MUCH. NOD AND WALK BY LIKE YOU DON'T KNOW ME.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

GINA, WHAT IS IT THAT WOMEN LOOK FOR MOST IN A GUY?
FUNNY... GOOD-LOOKING... FINANCIALLY STABLE...
OKAY, LET'S TRY THIS... WHAT ARE THE LEAST OBJECTIONABLE QUALITIES WOMEN LOOK FOR IN A GUY?

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

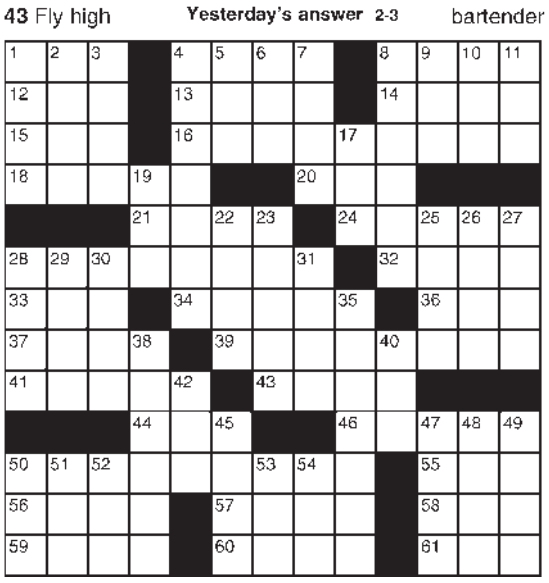
ACROSS
1 That girl
4 Nursery cry
8 Cave creatures
12 Light (Lat.)
13 Panache
14 Squad
15 Flamenco cheer
16 "Shucks!"
18 Pricey handbag brand
20 Revue segment
21 Crooned
24 Gets better
28 "Take a chance!"
32 Laugh-a-minute
33 "Caught ya!"
34 Pitchers
36 Calendar box
37 Kitten calls
39 "Marathon Man" query
41 Trousers
43 Fly high
44 Kanga's kid
46 Alpine air?
50 "Stop obsessing over this"
55 Green prefix
56 Begged
57 Isaac's eldest
58 To and —
59 Faction
60 Genie's home
61 "Tasty!"

DOWN
1 Trudge
2 Video-streaming site
3 Corp. bigwig
4 Act as a go-between
5 Mode lead-in
6 Scratch
7 "Downton Abbey" role
8 Bread spread
9 Carrier to Tokyo
10 Up to
11 Cardinal cap letters
17 German pronoun
19 Hit CBS series
22 "— lay me down ..."
23 Stab
25 Verdi opera
26 Rye buy
27 Eyelid woe
28 Pack (down)
29 Mother of Zeus
30 Show ennui
31 Small combo
35 Doesn't go to bed
38 Long step
40 "No seats"
42 Drunkard
45 Autobahn auto
47 Challenge
48 Beige
49 Appear ominously
50 Vinyl records
51 Yalie
52 Rocker Nugent
53 Simile center
54 "Cheers" bartender

Solution time: 23 mins.

T	A	M	E		R		M	S		C	A	D
L	I	A	M		A	C	A	I		A	H	E
C	R	I	B	S	H	E	E	I		R	O	N
			L	O	S	T		T	E	D	D	Y
A	R	C	E	D			T	E	S	S		
S	I	A	M		S	E	A	R	C	H	E	D
I	S	R		D	E	M	O	S		A	P	E
S	E	G	M	E	N	I	S		C	R	E	W
		O	C	P	S			D	U	K	E	S
H	O	S	N			S	O	A	R			
U	G	H		C	A	N	D	Y	S	H	O	P
M	L	I			R	U	E		O	M	A	H
P	E	P		S	I	B	S		H	O	H	Y

Yesterday's answer 2-3



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Isla Fisher, 45; Nathan Lane, 65; Morgan Fairchild, 71; Blythe Danner, 78.

Happy Birthday: Distance yourself from unpredictable people and situations this year. Make your aim to explore new interests, and align yourself with people who share your goals. The world is your oyster if you position yourself for success. Take the initiative to make things happen and to enjoy what life has to offer. Be the master of your destiny. Romance is featured. Your numbers are 6, 14, 25, 28, 34, 39, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Be patient with partners. Don't let your emotions lead to an argument that has a lasting effect on a relationship with someone you love or need in your corner. Pay attention, do a good job and choose love over discord. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Talks will be explosive if you aren't mindful of what others want. If you don't relish flak, work on projects that you can do by yourself. Focus on creativity, be inventive and keep moving until you finish what you start. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Emotions will rise to the surface. Learn from the experiences you encountered when dealing with others to help avoid a similar outcome. Be helpful, and take care of unfinished business to avoid problems with institutions. Make romance and love your preferences. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Connect with someone who shares your interests or concerns. Don't make a financial donation that you cannot afford. You'll get more in return if you contribute your skills, time or experience. Don't take a risk with your health. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* An unexpected financial change will have emotional implications. Look at every angle, and figure out the best way to make the most of a situation that you cannot alter. How you handle matters will make a difference to the outcome. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Don't rely on others to make a positive change. Do the work yourself, and take the credit for the outcome. Refuse to let a personal matter stand between you and what you are trying to achieve. Don't give in to temptation. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Problems at home will develop if you haven't spent enough time nurturing personal relationships or taking care of domestic matters. Examine your financial situation, and contribute just as much if not more as those who share expenses with you. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* A change heading in your direction will make you feel unsure about life, love and your prospects. Don't ignore what's happening. Do your part, and rid yourself of undue stress that stops you from living life peacefully. Take care of unfinished business. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Use your connections to get ahead. Pay off debts and collect money owed. A change in the way you handle your money and the way you live will give you a boost of energy that will lead to greater happiness. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Put more energy into your surroundings and domestic relationships. Be attentive, and make personal changes that will make life less stressful for those you love. Learn from your mistakes, and be more accommodating in order to gain respect. Romance is favored. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Read the fine print before you make a decision. Someone you least expect may try to outsmart you. Be respectful, but speak up if you think you spot a mistake. Keeping the peace will pay off. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* A change of plans will play out in your favor. Don't complain about something that may not occur. Keep a low profile, do things your way and present what you have to offer once you are satisfied with what you achieve. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are charming, sensitive and kind. You are intelligent and unique.

1 star: *Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes.* **2 stars:** *You can accomplish, but don't rely on others.* **3 stars:** *Focus and you'll reach your goals.* **4 stars:** *Aim high; start new projects.* **5 stars:** *Nothing can stop you; go for gold.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		6	5			4	9	
	7				2			5
5					9			8
9						3	7	1
6								9
4	1	7						2
2			8					4
3			1				5	
	4	5			3	8		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/03

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

3	8	9	7	2	6	1	5	4
2	6	1	3	5	4	8	9	7
4	5	7	8	9	1	6	3	2
6	2	8	5	7	3	4	1	9
5	7	4	9	1	2	3	6	8
9	1	3	4	6	8	2	7	5
1	4	5	6	8	9	7	2	3
8	9	6	2	3	7	5	4	1
7	3	2	1	4	5	9	8	6

Difficulty Level ★★

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

WHAT'S IN YOUR COLD CELLAR? Solution: 4 letters

P	N	J	A	M	Ⓢ	N	S	E	G	A	S	U	A	S
H	I	O	N	I	Ⓞ	N	S	S	S	P	I	E	S	S
C	S	N	S	M	Ⓓ	W	T	L	R	A	R	H	I	H
A	R	I	E	I	Ⓐ	U	A	E	S	A	L	S	T	E
S	E	L	D	A	N	S	S	P	A	C	E	A	E	L
H	P	G	R	A	P	E	F	R	U	I	T	U	M	V
E	P	I	E	I	R	P	V	E	C	H	C	Q	S	I
W	E	P	N	V	C	E	L	L	E	E	C	S	S	N
S	P	R	E	S	A	O	S	E	B	B	L	T	I	G
C	U	R	E	D	R	N	G	R	A	P	E	S	E	O
T	A	E	M	A	R	A	A	R	O	E	E	A	T	K
J	U	I	C	E	O	B	P	A	B	H	K	A	N	E
A	U	S	W	A	T	E	R	B	S	E	M	I	L	S
R	E	G	L	E	S	S	U	R	B	O	T	T	L	E
S	E	H	S	I	D	A	R	U	T	A	B	A	G	A

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Area, Barbecue, Barrel, Beans, Beets, Bottle, Brussel, Carrots, Cashews, Cured, Escarole, Grapefruit, Grapes, Horseradish, Items, Jams, Jars, Jugs, Juice, Ketchup, Leek, Lemon, Limes, Meat, Onions, Parsnips, Peanuts, Peppers, Pies, Pineapple, Preserve, Radishes, Rutabaga, Salami, Salsa, Sauce, Sausages, Shelving, Soda, Space, Squash, Tomato, Turnips, Venison, Water

Yesterday's Answer: Grape Leaves

Treasuries 24 through 42 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Booker hits 3 in return as Suns edge Mavs

DALLAS (AP)— Phoenix Suns coach Monty Williams gladly confessed that he junked his plan to carefully monitor Devin Booker's minutes down the stretch with his All-Star guard playing for the first time since Jan. 22.

Booker hit a 3-pointer with 1.5 seconds left in his return and the Suns rallied past the Dallas Mavericks for the second straight game, winning 109-108 on Monday night.

Booker finished with 24 points, 20 in the second half, and 31 minutes. He went into the game ranked 12th in the NBA averaging 35.7 minutes per game before being sidelined with a left hamstring strain.

"I imagine if I'd have taken Book out, that would have been the first time you'd seen a player knock a coach out on the sidelines," Williams said.

The Suns trailed by 11 with 4:48 to play in the third quarter before winning their third straight, including a 111-105 victory at Dallas on Saturday when they trailed by 15 late in the third quarter.

The Mavericks dropped their sixth in a row, their ninth loss in their last 11 games and their fourth straight defeat at home. Luka Doncic missed a 27-foot shot at the buzzer.

Booker took a pass on the winning basket from Chris Paul, who finished with a season-high 34 points to go with nine rebounds and nine assists.

AP

Phoenix Suns guard Devin Booker (1) drives against Dallas Mavericks guard Josh Richardson in the first half during an NBA game, Monday, Feb. 1, 2021, in Dallas.

Deandre Ayton had 10 points and 17 rebounds for his seventh double-double in his past eight games.

Doncic led the Mavericks with 25 points following a slow start in which he scored only two points in the first quarter on free throws. Josh Richardson scored a season-high 24 points and Kristaps Porzingis added 19, 14 in the second half, after sitting out Saturday's game.

Dallas coach Rick Carlisle said his team was aware it had a foul to give on the Suns' winning possession.

"We didn't take it. That falls on me," Carlisle said. "There's not going to be any finger-pointing."

Bucks 134, Trail Blazers 106

In Milwaukee, Jrue Holiday scored 22 points, Bobby Portis added 21 and the Bucks snapped a two-game skid by trouncing Portland.

The Bucks pulled ahead for good midway through the first quarter and led by as many as 39 points early in the fourth period.

"Obviously we really, really needed this win really, really bad," Portis said. "We didn't want to drop three in a row. Us getting this win tonight was big."

Milwaukee went 21 of 42 from 3-point range and shot 55.2% overall. That represented a reversal of fortune for the Bucks, who had been lit up from long range during their three-game road trip.

Hornets 129, Heat 121 OT

In Miami, Malik Monk came off the bench to score 36 points and make nine 3-pointers, Devonte' Graham added 24 points and Charlotte rallied from a 10-point deficit in the final 2:47 of regulation to beat the Heat in overtime.

Monk sent the Hornets to OT by making a 3-pointer with 16.6 seconds left. Cody Zeller had 19 points and 12 rebounds, Gordon Hayward scored 19 and LaMelo Ball finished with 14 points and seven assists for Charlotte in his first start.

Jimmy Butler scored 25 points and Bam Adebayo added 23 for Miami, which got 19 from Max Strus. Duncan Robinson had 16, while Tyler Herro and Kelly Olynyk each scored 11 for Miami.

Lakers 107, Hawks 99

In Atlanta, Anthony Davis scored 25 points and LeBron James dominated down the stretch as Los Angeles closed out a nearly two-week trip with a victory over the Hawks.

The Lakers took control with a 16-0 run bookended around the end of the third quarter and the beginning of the fourth.

James finished with 21 points after managing only nine through the first three quarters.

Trae Young led the Hawks with 25 points and 16 assists.

Rockets 136, Thunder 106

In Oklahoma City, Eric Gordon scored 25 points and Houston hit an NBA record-tying 11 3-pointers in a 48-point first quarter, cruising past the Thunder.

John Wall scored the first eight points for the Rockets and finished with 18 points, six rebounds and five assists. Christian Wood also scored 18 and added 11 rebounds in Houston's sixth straight victory.

Gordon, Wood and Victor Oladipo all had 10 points in the first 12 minutes and the Rockets led by as many as 26 in the first half.

Grizzlies 133, Spurs 102

In San Antonio, Gorgui Dieng scored 19 points, Brandon Clarke had 18 and Memphis routed the Spurs to extend its winning streak to seven games.

Kyle Anderson and De'Anthony Melton added 17 points each and Ja Morant had 13 points and eight assists as Memphis won its second straight game after a 12-day layoff due to the league's health and safety protocols.

Keldon Johnson had 25 points and 11 rebounds for San Antonio.

Kings 118, Pelicans 109

In New Orleans, De'Aaron Fox scored 38 points, including 17 straight Sacramento points during the final seven minutes, and the Kings erased a 10-point, fourth-quarter deficit to beat the Pelicans.

Harrison Barnes scored 24 points and Richaun Holmes had 17 points, 10 rebounds and six blocks for the Kings, who won for the fourth time in five games.

Fox wound up outscoring New Orleans by himself in the fourth quarter, 17-15, highlighting his outburst with ball fakes on penetrating drives that left defenders flat-footed before he finished fluidly at the rim.

Cavaliers 100, Timberwolves 98

In Cleveland, Collin Sexton scored 26 points and Jarrett Allen had 23 points and 18 rebounds, leading the Cavaliers over Minnesota for a split of their home-and-home series.

Darius Garland had 19 points and 11 assists for the Cavaliers, who had lost four of their last five games, including a 109-104 decision at Minnesota one night earlier. Allen blocked five shots in his initial start since being acquired from Brooklyn on Jan. 14.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic	W	L	PCT	GB
Philadelphia	15	6	.714	0.0
Brooklyn	13	9	.591	2.5
Boston	10	8	.556	3.5
New York	9	13	.409	6.5
Toronto	8	12	.400	6.5
Central				
Milwaukee	12	8	.600	0.0
Indiana	11	9	.550	1.0
Cleveland	10	11	.476	2.5
Chicago	8	11	.421	3.5
Detroit	5	15	.250	7.0
Southeast				
Atlanta	10	10	.500	0.0
Charlotte	10	11	.476	0.5
Orlando	8	13	.381	2.5
Miami	7	13	.350	3.0
Washington	4	12	.250	4.0

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific	W	L	PCT	GB
LA Clippers	16	5	.762	0.0
LA Lakers	16	6	.727	0.5
Phoenix	11	8	.579	4.0
Golden State	11	9	.550	4.5
Sacramento	9	11	.450	6.5
Southwest				
Memphis	9	6	.600	0.0
Houston	10	9	.526	1.0
San Antonio	11	10	.524	1.0
Dallas	8	13	.381	4.0
New Orleans	7	12	.368	4.0
Northwest				
Utah	15	5	.750	0.0
Denver	12	8	.600	3.0
Portland	10	9	.526	4.5
Oklahoma City	8	11	.421	6.5
Minnesota	5	15	.250	10

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berhalter's talent search continues to richly reward USMNT

ORLANDO—Gregg Berhalter has cast a wide net in his search for national team talent, auditioning a record 40 players in his first 23 games as U.S. coach. So far he's been rewarded for that work, with four players he recruited contributing to the scoring and another pitching a shutout in goal in Sunday's 7-0 win over Trinidad and Tobago in Orlando, Fla.

The result, combined with six-goal performances in the final two games of 2020, marked the first time in national team history the U.S. has scored at least five goals in three consecutive games.

"Overall it's very difficult to pick out a player that didn't play well," Berhalter said.

Jesús Ferreira, making his second international appearance, had two goals and three assists while defenders Sam Vines and Miles Robinson, both playing in their third match for the U.S., combined for a goal and two assists. Goalkeeper Matt Turner, in his U.S. debut, stopped a penalty kick midway through the second half to preserve the clean sheet.

"The upside of seeing these many players and working with these many players is that they're familiar with what we do," the coach continued. "We know we have a busy schedule this year. We also know that a large portion of the players that received first caps are very young players.

"The earlier we can get our hands on them, the earlier we can work with them, the better off this whole program can be in the future."

Indeed, it will be an active and important year for the U.S., with a schedule that includes the Nations League, Gold Cup, eight World Cup qualifiers and the Olympic qualifying tournament. And Trinidad, playing its first game in 14 months, may not have been the best opponent to prepare for that.

Outmatched from the start, Trinidad was outshot 19-2 with the U.S. putting 12 of those tries on target.

"You play against your opponent," said Berhalter, whose team is unbeaten in its last seven games. "You have to still perform and that's what's most important. To me it's about how are we creating goal-scoring opportunities. How are we finishing goals. How we're defending, how we're pressing the ball.

Ferreira, Vines, Lewis and Robinson are all eligible for the Olympic qualifying tournament, and under-23 competition scheduled for March in Guadalajara, Mexico. ***(NBC)***

Chiefs' Hill offers to race Bucs' Miller

TAMPA BAY (AP)—Kansas City Chiefs star Tyreek Hill wants to be the Super Bowl halftime show.

Hill said Monday he'd be willing to race Tampa Bay receiver Scotty Miller during intermission at Raymond James Stadium on Sunday.

"Someone line that up for us," Hill said.

Miller raised eyebrows last week when he said he believes he would win a one-on-one footrace with Hill, considered one of the fastest players in the NFL.

"I'm taking me every day of the week," Miller told The Dan Patrick Show. "I'll take me over anybody. Tyreek is unbelievable, super quick, unbelievable talent. But if we're talking about a race, I've got all the confidence in myself going up against anybody."

Hill was given several chances to challenge Miller's assertion during a virtual media day, but he declined each time.

"I feel like Scotty answered that question the right way," Hill said. "I feel like if someone asked Luke, 'Hey, Luke, are you faster than Tyreek? Or, hey, Rob, are you faster than Tyreek?' Your answer should be, 'Yes, I'm that confident in myself that I'm faster than Tyreek.' That's any man.

"So Scotty answered that question the right way. But do I think he's faster than me? I don't know. I don't know. Maybe we can do something during halftime or something like that. Someone line that up for us."

Hill came close to tipping his hand, though, when asked about any NFL cornerback being able to cover him.

"For me to just sit here and say someone can keep up with me would be, you know, I don't know," he said. "But I feel like in my heart no one can keep up with me. I've ran track. I've ran Olympics. Somebody in the NFL, nah, I don't really believe so."

AP

Kansas City Chiefs star Tyreek Hill, right, is willing to race Tampa Bay receiver Scotty Miller during intermission in Super Bowl at Raymond James Stadium on Sunday.

Awards season

NFL Honors, the annual primetime special when The Associated Press hands out its individual league awards, will be broadcast nationally the night before the Super Bowl.

The two-hour show airs Saturday on CBS with Emmy Award-winning entertainer Steve Harvey hosting for the third consecutive year. Grammy award-winning rock band Green Day will open the show, and Leslie Odom Jr. will perform during the in-memoriam segment.

The show also includes the unveiling of the 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame class and the prestigious Walter Payton Man of the Year announcement.

Chiefs kingdom

Patrick Mahomes and Travis Kelce have a record-breaking connection on the field for the Chiefs. But, what if the quarterback and tight end had to choose spirit animals for each other?

Well, that question was posed to both during media day—and the answers, not surprisingly, drew laughs.

"Travis, man, it's got to be something funny," Mahomes said. "I think he'd be like a giraffe. He's kind of just out there grazing around the field, trying to make something happen. Finding different things he can run around and do stuff with anything. He's always a good time."

Kelce was taken aback by Mahomes' choice, saying he always thought of himself as more of a tiger.

"What is a giraffe good for other than eating trees?" an exasperated Kelce said. "What does he do? Does he run away from danger? I guess they do have a nice head whip as a weapon. I've got to do my research on giraffes now so I don't sound silly."

When told that the quarterback chose a wolf for himself, the tight end had another suggestion.

"I think he's got a little frog in him, man," Kelce said, laughing. "He's already got the voice of a frog. Who knows? Maybe he'll get a kiss from a princess and turn into a knight. Who knows, man? That guy's nuts."

Super streak continues

The matriarch of the Kansas City Chiefs will continue her streak of seeing every Super Bowl in person.

Chiefs chairman Clark Hunt said Monday his 82-year-old mother, Norma Hunt, will make the trip to Tampa, Florida, to see Kansas City play the Buccaneers on Sunday. He added that she has been cautious all season because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"My mother's very excited to be headed back to the Super Bowl," said Clark Hunt, who serves as the face of the franchise's ownership family. "Last year was a big one for her. It was her 54th but the first one she had been to in 50 years that the Chiefs were participating, so that was special."

Norma Hunt was working as a schoolteacher and hostess for the Dallas Texans when she met Lamar Hunt in 1964, five years after he and other members of "The Foolish Club" founded the AFL. Hunt moved the Texans to Kansas City and renamed them the Chiefs and the upstart league eventually merged with the NFL.

Lamar Hunt, who died in 2006, also coined the term "Super Bowl" for the league's championship game.

The Chiefs lost to the Packers in the first Super Bowl, then beat the Minnesota Vikings in the fourth one. That was their last Super Bowl appearance before last season, when the Chiefs rallied to beat the San Francisco 49ers.

Hit 'em, join 'em

Defensive end Frank Clark is glad Mahomes is his teammate and not his opponent even though Clark hit the Chiefs QB three times in the Seattle Seahawks' 38-31 win over Kansas City in a Week 16 matchup in 2018.

After the season, Kansas City sent its first-round pick in 2019 and a second-round pick in the 2020 draft to Seattle for Clark.

"It was almost like a 'Thank you, God' type of thing because I knew what was coming," Clark said. "I knew I didn't have to game plan against him anymore. So, I was kind of thankful, like a huge weight lifted off my shoulders."

While Clark has only had 14 sacks in two seasons in Kansas City after having 13 in Seattle in 2018 alone, he's added seven sacks in the playoffs with the Chiefs, including two this postseason.

Pirate chief

Kevin Ross spent the first 11 seasons of his 14-year NFL career in Kansas City, where the seventh-round draft pick made five playoff appearances, became a fan favorite and earned two trips to the Pro Bowl.

The standout cornerback never made it to the Super Bowl, though.

It took Ross joining Bruce Arians' staff in Tampa Bay—he's the team's defensive backs coach—to finally make it to the final week of the playoffs.

"It's unreal, really," said Ross, whose name was added to the ring of honor inside Arrowhead Stadium in 2011. "To watch them last year winning, I was very happy for them, and now to play against them in the biggest game I've been involved with is special. I hate that someone has to lose."

Ross has his hands full this week preparing for Mahomes, who had 462 yards passing and three touchdowns in their Week 12 matchup.

Packers planning for long-term future that includes Rodgers

WISCONSIN (AP)—Green Bay Packers general manager Brian Gutekunst and coach Matt LaFleur say they expect Aaron Rodgers to remain their team's starting quarterback in 2021 and beyond.

Gutekunst and LaFleur made those comments Monday during season-ending Zoom sessions with reporters. After the Packers' 31-26 loss to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the NFC championship game, Rodgers had said, "there's a lot of guys' futures that are uncertain, myself included."

"We're really excited not only for next year, but the years to come," Gutekunst said.

When asked specifically whether that meant keeping Rodgers beyond the 2021 season, Gutekunst said, "Absolutely." Rodgers has three years remaining on a four-year, $134 million contract extension he signed in August 2018.

"Obviously he's under contract, and he's playing at an extremely high level," Gutekunst said. "What we're trying to do as an organization and what we're trying to accomplish, we can't do without Aaron Rodgers right now. He's such a part of what we've done. He's such a part of what we're doing right now and certainly in the future."

Rodgers' long-term future has been a topic of league-wide speculation ever since the Packers traded up four picks to take Utah State quarterback Jordan Love with the 26th overall selection in the 2020 draft. Rodgers has said on multiple occasions that the Love selection complicated his own hopes of playing his entire career with Green Bay.

The subject came up again when Rodgers discussed his future after the NFC championship game. The two-time MVP clarified his remarks two days later on SiriusXM Radio's "The Pat McAfee Show" by saying that "I don't think there's any reason why I wouldn't be back" but adding that "there's not many absolutes, as you guys know, in this business."

Gutekunst said Monday he views Love "as a very talented prospect that we're really excited about developing." Gutekunst noted the Packers have a history of giving young quarterbacks time to develop.

Rodgers, a first-round pick in 2005, backed up Hall of Fame quarterback Brett Favre for three seasons before taking over as the starter. Gutekunst cited the examples of Matt Hasselbeck and Aaron Brooks, who also backed up Favre at Green Bay before starting multiple seasons elsewhere.

MLB to start on time after players rejected delay

NEW YORK (AP)—Major League Baseball will proceed with an on-time start to spring training and the season after players rejected a plan Monday night to delay reporting by a more than a month.

"In light of the MLBPA's rejection of our proposal, and their refusal to counter our revised offer this afternoon, we are moving forward and instructing our clubs to report for an on-time start to spring training and the championship season, subject to reaching an agreement on health and safety protocols," MLB said in a statement.

"We were able to complete a 2020 season through Herculean efforts and sacrifices made by our players, club staff and MLB staff to protect one another," MLB said. "We will do so again, together, as we work towards playing another safe and entertaining season in 2021."

MLB proposed to the players' association on Friday that the start of spring training be pushed back from Feb. 17 to March 22, that opening day be delayed from April 1 to April 28 and that each team's schedule be cut from 162 games to 154. MLB believed the virus situation would improve during the month delay.

AP

In this July 24, 2020, file photo, empty seats are viewed in Busch Stadium as St. Louis Cardinals starting pitcher Jack Flaherty throws in the first inning baseball game against the Pittsburgh Pirates in St. Louis. Major League Baseball players rejected a proposal to delay the start of spring training and the season due to the coronavirus pandemic, vowing Monday, Feb. 1, 2021, to report under the original schedule.

Under the proposal, each team would have been allowed to be scheduled up to 12 split doubleheaders. Experimental rules for seven-inning doubleheaders and beginning extra innings with a runner on second base would have continued for a second season.

As part of the offer, MLB included the expansion of the playoffs from 10 teams to 14 and extending the designated hitter to the National League for the second straight season, a plan the union rejected Jan. 6.

Bruce Meyer, the union's director of collective bargaining, called deputy commissioner Dan Halem on Monday to inform him the proposal had been rejected, two people familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press. The people spoke on condition of anonymity because that detail was not announced.

Halem then asked Meyer to make a counteroffer, and Meyer sent an email asking MLB to guarantee salary and service time in the event of an interruption, one of the people said.

MLB's proposal Friday included expanded rights for Commissioner Rob Manfred to interrupt the season. Halem responded to Meyer on Monday and said MLB would agree to withdraw that part of the proposal but that each side would retain whatever rights it has under the labor and player contracts, the person said.

Meyer responded Monday night that the union will not make any more proposals, that the union did not believe MLB's plan was designed to protect health and safety, and that players expect MLB to tell teams that it intends to start spring training and the season on time, the person said.

"The MLBPA executive board and player leadership reviewed and discussed the owners' proposal throughout the weekend and today," the union said then in its public statement. "The clear-cut result of these deliberations is that players will not accept MLB's proposal, will instead continue preparations for an on-time start to the 2021 season, and will accept MLB's commitment to again direct its clubs to prepare for an on-time start.

"We do not make this decision lightly. Players know first-hand the efforts that were required to complete the abbreviated 2020 season, and we appreciate that significant challenges lie ahead. We look forward to promptly finalizing enhanced health and safety protocols that will help players and clubs meet these challenges."

Baseball's collective bargaining agreement, which expires next Dec. 1, calls for voluntary reporting dates of Feb. 17 for pitchers, catchers and injured players, and Feb. 22 for others. The mandatory reporting date, which few players stick to, is Feb. 27.

While MLB's proposal said players would have received 100% of pay if all 154 scheduled games were played, the plan would have given Manfred the right to stop spring training, the regular season or the postseason if government restrictions prevented five or more teams from playing home games even without fans, if government rules restricted travel in the United States, if Manfred determined after consultation with medical experts and the union there is an unreasonable safety risk to players or staff, or if the number of regular major leaguers unavailable because of COVID-19 undermined competitive integrity.

"MLB's proposal offers no salary or service time protections in the event of further delays, interruptions, or cancellation of the season," the union said.

Seven teams in each league would have made the playoffs, and only the division winner with the best record would have received a bye in the best-of-three first round. There would have been a selection show in which the seeded teams would have been able to, in order of percentage, select their first-round opponent. The three advancing teams in each league and the one with a bye would have advanced to the best-of-five Division Series, starting the traditional rounds of the postseason.

While the sides spent weeks disagreeing on starting the season last year, MLB went ahead with a 60-game schedule and the sides reached a separate agreement to expand last year's playoffs to 16 teams in a deal reached just before the season opener.

CANOE

From Page 20

women's, and co-ed 500m and 1,00m events. The next two legs, scheduled for Feb. 20 and March 6, will have teams battling for points in the same events, while double points will be up for grabs in the sprints finale slated for March. 13.

In the long-distance race, it will only be a one-time event with the 4.5-mile race on Feb. 27 also starting at Kilili Beach with a turnaround point between the 13 Fisherman Monument and the Lighthouse Chanel. The long-distance race will also feature three divisions—men's, women's, and co-ed.

Participating teams have until Feb. 10 to turn in their rosters for the competition that PSS is coordinating with the Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation.

Last year, before the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled the remaining sports events on island, including interscholastic competitions, PSS was able to complete its canoe season.

MHS emerged as the champion in the women's division after collecting 68 points against the 48 and 35 of Kagman and Saipan Southern. In the men's, the Ayuyus were the runaway winner with their 85 points, as the Manta Rays and Dolphins gained only 49 and 15 markers, respectively.

Kagman also bagged the co-ed championship after scoring 80 points in last season's series and topped both the men's and women's long distance races.

BRACE

From Page 20

way Park last month, riders can have practice rides everyday.

"We open the track for training from 8am to 6pm every day. Before, when we were still using the Kan Pacific grounds, we can only practice every Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday and under limited time," the MRA official said.

Alvarez added that MRA recently signed up new members and that would make the field even more competitive and the races more exciting.

Power Puff Class riders wait for the start of the race. JOSEPH CHIN

JOSEPH CHIN

Riders in the Peewee Class 1 race on Heat 1 during the kick-off leg of the Marianas Racing Association Point Race Season last month at the CowTown Raceway Park.

Booker hits 3 in return as Suns edge Mavs

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Chiefs' Hill offers to race Bucs' Miller

PAGE 18

Interscholastic canoe season on

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series got the green light and will kick off the season on Feb. 13 at the Kilili Beach Park.

PSS Student Support Services Athletic Program director Nick Gross confirmed that outrigger canoe races for high school students will go ahead, as they have already secured permission from the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality and the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force. BECQ is the permitting agency for activities that will be done in beaches on island, while big-crowd events at this time of the pandemic should get clearance from the task force first.

The canoe competition will be the third tournament that PSS will be hosting for this school year and second in 2021, as the district is slowly, but safely resuming its interscholastic sports program by holding low-risk events. PSS started with the cross country season (elementary, middle school, and high school) in November and now has the 4v4 beach volleyball for high school that began late last month.

"We are set. We should have the men's and women's teams from Kagman High School, Saipan Southern High School, and Marianas High School," said Gross, who also extended the canoe competition invites to private schools.

The Feb. 13 kick-off will serve as warm-up races for the Dolphins, Manta Rays, and Ayuyus, as no points will be at stake in the men's,

See CANOE on Page 19

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

In this file photo, Kagman High School paddlers make a turn during the 1,000m finals in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series in the waters off Kilili Beach.

Brace for more competitive races

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The kick-off leg of the Marianas Racing Association Point Race Season last month was just a preview for even more competitive races at the CowTown Raceway Park.

There were multiple ties in several classes in the opening leg of MRA's season last Jan. 24, including the deadlock for the top spot in the Peewee Class 1 and the Veterans Class, while the point differences in other races were small, and rankings shakeup took place in other divisions after heat 2.

"The opening was really competitive and I am not surprise when position changed in Heat 2. Our riders have been through a lot of practice time and practice heats since April and they've shown tremendous improvement," Expert Open rider and MRA vice president Cuki Alvarez said.

Alvarez finished first in the Expert Open and came in second in both heats of the Veterans Class to get 44 points and place third overall. Dave Celis was ranked third on Heat 1 of the Veteran Class, but moved to first when he ruled Heat 2, relegating Heat 1 winner Melvin Cepeda to second place. Celis and Cepeda finished with 45 points each, but the former prevailed in the tie due to his first place finish in the final heat.

The same thing happened in the Peewee Class I with Zane Fujihira battling back from a second place finish on Heat 1, as he won Heat 2, nosing out Ezekiel Camacho in the tiebreak. In the Power Puff Class, the Top 3 rankings on Heats 1 and 2 were different. Eventual champion Billie Pangelinan was first on Heat 1 and second on Heat 2, while runner-up Nanako Celis came in at third in the opening heat and first in the second, and Edinna Cepeda was second in the first heat and third in the final.

For the Novice Class, although Corry Pangelinan dominated the 12-rider field, rankings in the division changed on Heat 2, making the battle for the No. 2 to No. 9 spot a close one.

"In any class, the Top 3 and the even the entire rankings can change anytime when the rider makes mistakes or has mechanical problems. Every race is going to be a test of endurance and power of the machine and the rider themselves. Everyone will pick up the pace as the season progresses," Alvarez said.

JOSEPH CHIN

Riders in the Veteran Class head out to the course during the opening leg of the Marianas Racing Association Point Race Season last month at the CowTown Raceway Park.

JOSEPH CHIN

Two Novice Class riders are in a tight race.

Daily rides/practice

Alvarez expects the races to get tighter in the succeeding legs now that riders have more opportunities to train.

He said that since they opened the CowTown Race-

See BRACE on Page 19